

OUR WORLD;

OR,

THE DEMOCRAT'S RULE.

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"In honest tale speeds best truth plainly told."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXVI. How they Stole the Preacher	1
XXVII. Nice Effects of Competition in Human Things	13
XXVIII. The Pretty Children are to be sold	30
XXIX. Nature shames itself	15
XXX. The Vision of Death is past	57
XXXI. A Friend is Woman	76
XXXII. Democracy has a Prison for Fathers	96
XXXIII. Venders of Human Property are not responsible for its Mental Caprices	108
XXXIV. A Common Incident shortly told	130
XXXV. The Children are improving	134
XXXVI. In which Democracy's Workings are shown	156
XXXVII. Only an Item in the Common Calendar of Events	172
XXXVIII. In which Regrets are shown of Little Worth	179
XXXIX. How we should all be forgiving	193
XL. Containing various matters	204
XLI. Nicholas's Simple Story	223
XLII. He would deliver her from Bondage	233

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
XLIII. Other Phases of Democracy's Rule	216
XLIV. How Daddy Bob departed	256
XLV. In which it is shown how Democrats live fearing one another	275
XLVI. Democratic Justice democratically administered	284
XLVII. Prosperity the result of Justice	300
XLVIII. In which the Fate of Franconia is seen	308
XLIX. In which is a Sad Recognition	322
L. In which a Dangerous Principle is illustrated	335
LI. A Continuation of the last Chapter	346
LII. In which are Pleasures and Disappointments	356
LIII. A Familiar Scene, in which Pringle Blowers has Business	365
LIV. In which are Discoveries and Pleasant Surprises	375
LV. In which is a Happy Meeting, some Curious Facts Developed, and Clotilda's History disclosed	389
LVI. In which a Plot is disclosed, and the Man-seller made to pay the Penalty of his Crimes	399

OUR WORLD.

CHAPTER XXV.

HOW THEY STOLE THE PREACHER.

THE scenes we have described in the foregoing chapter have not yet been brought to a close. In and about the tavern may be seen groups of men, in the last stage of muddled mellowness, the rank fumes of bad liquor making the very air morbid. Conclaves of grotesque figures are seated in the veranda and drinking-room, breaking the midnight stillness with their stifled songs, their frenzied congratulations, their political jargon; nothing of fatal consequence would seem to have happened.

"Did master send for me? You've risen from a rag shop, my man!" interrupts the physician.

"Master there—sorry to see him sick—owns me." Harry cast a subdued look on the bed where lay his late purchaser.

Harry's appearance is not the most prepossessing; he might have been taken for anything else but a minister of the gospel; though the quick eye of the southerner readily detected those frank and manly features which belong to a

class of very dark men who exhibit uncommon natural genius.

At the sound of Harry's voice, M'Fadden makes an effort to raise himself on his elbow. The loss of blood has so reduced his physical power that his effort is unsuccessful. He sinks back, prostrate,—requests the physician to assist him in turning over. He will face his preacher. Putting out his hand, he embraces him cordially,—motions him to be seated.

The black preacher, that article of men merchandise, takes a seat at the bed-side, while the man of medicine withdraws to the table. The summons is as acceptable to Harry as it is strange to the physician, who has never before witnessed so strange a scene of familiarity between slave and master. All is silent for several minutes. Harry looks at his master, as if questioning the motive for which he is summoned into his presence; and still he can read the deep anxiety playing upon M'Fadden's distorted countenance. At length, Harry, feeling that his presence may be intrusive, breaks the silence by enquiring if there is anything he can do for master. Mr. M'Fadden whispers something, lays his trembling hand on Harry's, casts a meaning glance at the physician, and seems to swoon. Returning to his bed-side, the physician lays his hand upon the sick man's brow; he will ascertain the state of his system.

"Give—him—his—Bible," mutters the wounded man, pointing languidly to the table. "Give it to him that he may ask God's blessing for me—for me—for me,——"

The doctor obeys his commands, and the wretch, heart bounding with joy, receives back his inspiring companion. It is dear to him and with a smile of gratitude invading his

countenance he returns thanks. There is pleasure in that little book. "And now, Harry, my boy," says M'Fadden, raising his hand to Harry's shoulder, and looking imploringly in his face as he regains strength; "forgive what I have done. I took from you that which was most dear to your feelings; I took it from you when the wounds of your heart were gushing with grief——" He makes an effort to say more, but his voice fails; he will wait a few moments.

The kind words touch Harry's feelings; tears glistening in his eyes tell how he struggles to suppress the emotions of his heart. "Did you mean my wife and children, master?" he enquires.

M'Fadden, somewhat regaining strength, replies in the affirmative. He acknowledges to have seen that the thing "warn't just right." His imagination has been wandering through the regions of heaven, where, he is fully satisfied, there is no objection to a black face. God has made a great opening in his eyes and heart just now. He sees and believes such things as he neither saw nor believed before; they pass like clouds before his eyes, never, never to be erased from his memory. Never before has he thought much about repentance; but now that he sees heaven on one side and hell on the other, all that once seemed right in bartering and selling the bodies and souls of men, vanishes. There, high above all, is the vengeance of heaven written in letters of blood, execrating such acts, and pointing to the retribution. It is a burning consciousness of all the suffering he has inflicted upon his negroes. Death, awful monitor! stares him in the face; it holds the stern realities of truth and justice before him; it tells him of the wrong, —points him to the right. The unbending mandates

HOW THEY STOLE THE PREACHER.

of slave law, giving to man power to enshrine himself with crimes the judicious dare not punish, are being consumed before Omnipotence, the warning voice of which is calling him to his last account.

And now the wounded man is all condescension, hoping forgiveness! His spirit has yielded to Almighty power: he no longer craves for property in man; no, his coarse voice is subdued into softest accents. He whispers "coloured man," as if the merchandise changed as his thoughts are brought in contact with revelations of the future.

"Take the Bible, my good boy—take it, read it to me, before I die. Read it, that it may convert my soul. If I have neglected myself on earth, forgive me; receive my repentance, and let me be saved from eternal misery. Read, my dear good boy, (M'Fadden grasps his hand tighter and tighter), and let your voice be a warning to those who never look beyond earth and earth's enjoyments." The physician thinks his patient will get along until morning, and giving directions to the attendants, leaves him.

Harry has recovered from the surprise which so sudden a change of circumstances produced, and has drawn from the patient the cause of his suffering. He opens the restored Bible, and reads from it, to Mr. M'Fadden's satisfaction. He reads from Job; the words producing a deep effect upon the patient's mind.

The wretched preacher, whose white soul is concealed beneath black skin, has finished his reading. He will now address himself to his master, in the following simple manner.

"Master, it's one thing to die and another to die happy.

It is one thing to be prepared to die, another to forget that we have to die, to leave the world and its nothingness behind us. But you are not going to die, not now. Master, the Lord will forgive you if you make your repentance durable. 'Tis only the fear of death that has produced the change on your mind. Do, master! learn the Lord; be just to we poor creatures, for the Lord now tells you it is not right to buy and sell us——"

"Buy and sell you?" interrupts the frightened man, making an effort to rise from his pillow; "that I never will, man nor woman. If God spares my life, my people shall be liberated; I feel different on that subject, now! The difference between the commerce of this world and the glory of heaven brightens before me. I was an ignorant man on all religious matters; I only wanted to be set right in the way of the Lord,—that's all." Again he draws his face under the sheet, writhing with the pain of his wound.

"I wish everybody could see us as master does, about this time; for surely God can touch the heart of the most hardened. But master ain't going to die so soon as he thinks," mutters Harry, wiping the sweat from his face, as he lays his left hand softly upon master's arm. "God guide us in all coming time, and make us forget the retribution that awaits our sins!" he concludes, with a smile glowing on his countenance.

The smouldering words catch upon the patient's ear. He starts suddenly from his pillow, as if eager to receive some favourable intelligence. "Don't you think my case dangerous, my boy? Do you know how deep is the wound?" he enquires, his glassy eyes staring intently at Harry.

"It is all the same, master!" is the reply.

"Give me your hand again (M'Fadden grasps his hand and seems to revive), pray for me now; your prayers will be received into heaven, they will serve me there!"

"Ah, master," says Harry, kindly, interrupting him at this juncture, "I feel more than ever like a christian. It does my heart good to hear you talk so true, so kind. How different from yesterday! then I was a poor slave, forced from my children, with nobody to speak a kind word for me; everybody to reckon me as a good piece of property only. I forgive you, master—I forgive you; God is 'a loving God, and will forgive you also." The sick man 'is consoled; and, while his preacher kneels at his bed-side, offering up a prayer imploring forgiveness, he listens to the words as they fall like cooling drops on his burning soul. The earnestness—the fervency and pathos of the words, as they gush forth from the lips of a wretch, produce a still deeper effect upon the wounded man. Nay, there is even a chord loosened in his heart; he sobs audibly. "Live on earth so as to be prepared for heaven; that when death knocks at the door you may receive him as a welcome guest. But, master! you cannot meet our Father in heaven while the sin of selling men clings to your garments. Let your hair grow grey with justice, and God will reward you," he concludes.

"True, Harry; true! (he lays his hand on the black man's shoulder, is about to rise) it is the truth plainly told, and nothing more." He will have a glass of water to quench his thirst; Harry must bring it to him, for there is consolation in his touch. Seized with another pain, he grasps with his left hand the arm of his consoler, works his fingers through his matted hair, breathes violently, contorts his face haggardly, as if suffering acutely. Harry waits

till the spasm has subsided, then calls an attendant to watch the patient while he goes to the well. This done he proceeds into the kitchen to enquire for a vessel. Having entered that department as the clock strikes two, he finds Ellen busily engaged preparing food for Mr. McFadden's property, which is yet fast secured in the pen. Feeling himself a little more at liberty to move about unrestrained, he procures a vessel, fills it at the well, carries it to his master's bed-side, sees him comfortably cared for, and returns to the kitchen, where he will assist Ellen with her mission of goodness.

The little pen is situated a few yards from the tavern, on the edge of a clump of tall pines.

Ellen has got ready the corn and bacon, and with Harry she proceeds to the pen, where the property are still enjoying that inestimable boon,—a deep sleep.

"Always sleeping," he says, waking them one by one at the announcement of corn and bacon. "Start up and get something good my girl has prepared for you." He shakes them, while Ellen holds the lantern. There is something piercing in the summons (meats are strong arguments with the slave); they start from their slumbers, seize upon the food, and swallow it with great relish. Harry and Ellen stand smiling over the gusto with which they swallow their coarse meal.

"You must be good boys to-night. Old master's sick; flat down on e' back, and 'spects he's going to die, he does." Harry shakes his head as he tells it to the astonished merchandise. "Had a great time at the crossing to-day; killed two or three certain, and almost put master on the plank."

"'Twarn't no matter, nohow: nobody lose nufin if old

Boss do die: nigger on e' plantation don' put e' hat in mournin'," mutters the negro woman, with an air of hatred. She has eaten her share of the meal, shrugs her shoulders, and again stretches her valuable body on the ground.

"Uncle Sparton know'd old Boss warn't gwine t' be whar de debil couldn't coteh 'em, so long as 'e tink. If dat old mas'r debil, what white man talk 'bout so much, don' gib 'em big roasting win 'e git 'e dah, better hab no place wid fireins fo' such folks," speaks up old Uncle Sparton, one of the negroes, whose face shines like a black-balled boot.

"Neber mind dat, Uncle Sparton; 'taint what ye say 'bout he. Ven mas'r debil coteh old Boss 'e don't coteh no fool. Mas'r debil down yander find old Boss too tuf fo' he business; he jus' like old hoss what neber die," rejoins another.

In a word, M'Fadden had told his negroes what a great democrat he was—how he loved freedom and a free country—until their ideas of freedom became strangely mystified; and they ventured to assert that he would not find so free a country when the devil became his keeper. "Mas'r tink 'e carry 'e plantation t' t'oder world wid him, reckon," Uncle Sparton grumblingly concludes, joining the motley conclave of property about to resume its repose.

Ellen returns to the house. Harry will remain, and have a few words more with the boys. A few minutes pass, and Ellen returns with an armful of blankets, with which she covers the people carefully and kindly. How full of goodness—how touching is the act! She has done her part, and she returns to the house in advance of Harry, who stops to take a parting good-night, and whisper a word of consolation in their ears. He looks upon them as dear brothers in

distress, objects for whom he has a fellow sympathy. He leaves them for the night; closes the door after him; locks it. He will return to Ellen, and enjoy a mutual exchange of feeling.

•Scarcely has he left the door, when three persons, disguised, rush upon him, muffle his head with a blanket, bind his hands and feet, throw him bodily into a waggon, and drive away at a rapid speed.

CHAPTER XXVI.

NICE EFFECTS OF COMPETITION IN HUMAN THINGS.

IT is enough to inform the reader that Romescos and Mr. M'Fadden were not only rival bidders for this very desirable piece of preaching property, but (being near neighbours) had become inveterate enemies and fierce political opponents. The former, a reckless trader in men, women, and children, was a daring, unprincipled, and revengeful man, whose occupation seldom called him to his plantation; while the latter was notorious as a hard master and a cruel tyrant, who exacted a larger amount of labour from his negroes than his fellow planters, and gave them less to eat. His opinion was, that a peck of corn a week was quite enough for a negro; and this was his systematic allowance;—but he otherwise tempted the appetites of his property, by driving them, famished, to the utmost verge of necessity. Thus driven to predatory acts in order to sustain life, the advantages offered by Romescos' swamp—generally well sprinkled with swine—were readily appropriated to a very good use.

Under covert of Romescos' absence, Mr. M'Fadden had no very scrupulous objection to his negroes foraging the amply provided swamp,—provided, however, they did the thing on the sly, were careful whose porker they dispatched, and said nothing to him about the eating. In fact, it was simply a matter of economy with Mr. M'Fadden; and as

Romescos had a great number of the obstinate brutes, it saved the trouble of raising such undignified stock. Finding, however, that neighbour M'Fadden, or his predatory negroes (such they were called), were laying claim to more than a generous share of their porkships, Romescos thought it high time to put the thing down by a summary process. But what particularly "riled" Romescos in this affair of the hogs was, that M'Fadden's negroes were not content with catching them in an honourable way, but would do it through the agency of nasty *cur-dogs*, which he always had despised, and held as unfit even to hunt niggers with. Several times had he expressed his willingness to permit a small number of his grunterns to be captured for the benefit of his neighbour's half-starved negroes, provided, always, they were hunted with honourable *hound-dogs*. He held such animals in high esteem, while curs he looked upon with utter contempt; he likened the one to the chivalrous old rice-planter, the other to a pettifogging schoolmaster, fit for nothing but to be despised and shot. With these feelings he (Romescos) declared his intention to kill the very first negro he caught in his swamp with cur-dogs; and he kept his word. Lying in ambush, he would await their approach, and, when most engaged in appropriating the porkers, rush from his hiding-place, shoot the dogs, and then take a turn at the more exhilarating business of shooting the negroes. He would, with all possible calmness, command the frightened property to approach and partake of his peculiar mixture, administered from his double-barrel gun.

That the reader may better understand Romescos' process of curing this malady of his neighbour's negroes, we will give it as related by himself. It is a curious mode of

dispatching negro property; the reader, however, cannot fail to comprehend it. "Plantin' didn't suit my notions a' gittin' rich, ye see, so I spec'lates in nigger property, and makes a better thing on't. But there's philosophy about the thing, and a body's got t' know the hang on't afore ne can twist it out profitably; so I keeps a sort of a plantation just to make a swell; cos ye got to make a splash to be anybody down south. Can't be a gentleman, ye see, 'cept ye plants cotton and rice; and then a feller what's got a plantation in this kind of a way can be a gentleman, and do so many other bits of trade to advantage. The thing works like the handle of a pump; and then it makes a right good place for raising young niggers, and gettin' old uns trimmed up. With me, the worst thing is that old screw-driver, McFadden, what don't care no more for the wear and tear of a nigger than nothin', and drives 'em like as many steam-engines he thinks he can keep going by feeding on saw-dust. He han't no conception a' nigger constitution, and is just the worst sort of a chap that ever cum south to get a fortune. Why, look right at his niggers: they look like crows after corn-shyekin. Don't give 'em no meat, and the critters must steal somethin' t' keep out a' the bone-yard. Well, I argers the case with Mack, tells him how t'll be atween he and me on this thing, and warns him that if he don't chunk more corn and grease into his niggers, there 'll be a ruptous fuss. But he don't stand on honour, as I does, especially when his property makes a haul on my swamp of shoats. I an't home often; so the hogs suffer; and Mack's niggers get the pork. 'This 'ere kind a' business'" (Romescos maintains the serious dignity of himself the while) "don't go down nohow with me; so Mack

and me just has a bit of a good-natured quarrel; and from that we gets at daggers' points, and I swears how I'll kill the first nigger o' his'n what steals hogs a' mine. Wouldn't a cared a sous, mark ye, but it cum crossways on a feller's feelins to think how the 'tarnal niggers had no more sense than t' hunt hogs a' mine with cur-dogs: bin hounds, honourable dogs, or respectable dogs what 'll do to hunt niggers with, wouldn't a cared a *toss* about it; but—when—I—hears—a cur-dog yelp, oh! hang me if it don't set my sensations all on pins, just as somethin' was crucifyin' a feller. I warns and talks, and then pleads like a lawyer what's got a bad case; but all to no end a' reformin' Mack's morals,—feller han't got no sense a' reform in him. So I sets my niggers on the scent—it gives 'em some fun—and swears I'll kill a nigger for every hog he steals. This I concludes on; and I never backs out when once I fixes a conclusion.

“Hears the *infernal cur-dog's* yelp, yelp, yelp, down in the swamp; then I creeps through the jungle so sly, lays low till the fellers cum up, all jumpin'—pig ahead, then dogs, niggers follerin', puffin' and blowin', eyes poppin' out, 'most out a' breath, just as if they tasted the sparerib afore they'd got the critter.

“Well, ye see, I know'd all the ins and outs of the law, —keeps mighty shy about all the judicial quibbles on't,—never takes nobody with me whose swearin' would stand muster in a court of law. All right on that score (*Romescos* exults in his law proficiency). I makes sure a' the dogs fust, al'ays keepin' the double-barrel on the right eye for the best nigger in the lot. It would make the longest-faced deacon in the district laugh to see the fire flash out a' the nigger's big black eyes when he sees the *cur* drop, knowin'

how he'll get the next plugs souced into him. It's only nat'ral, cos it would frighten a feller what warn't used to it just to see what a thunder-cloud of agitation the nigger screws his black face into. And then he starts to run, and puts it like streaks a' cannon-balls chased by express lightnin'.

"Stand still, ye thievin' varmint! hold up,—bring to a mooring: take the mixture according to Gunter!" I shouts. The way the nigger pulls up, begs, pleads, and says things what'll touch a feller's tender feelins, aint no small kind of an institution. 'Twould just make a man what had stretchy conscience think there was somethin' crooked somewhere. 'Well, boys,' says I, feeling a little soft about the stomach, 'seeing how it's yer Boss what don't feed ye, I'll be kind a' good, and give ye a dose of the mixture in an honourable way.' Then I loads t'other barrel, the feller's eyes flashin' streaks of blue lightnin' all the time, lookin' at how I runs it down, chunk! 'Now, boys,' says I, when the plugs* is all ready, 'there's system 'bout this ere thing a' ruine—t'aint killin' ye I wants,—don't care a copper about that (there an't no music in that), but must make it bring the finances out a' yer master's pocket. That's the place where he keeps all his morals. Now, run twenty paces and I'll gin ye a fair chance!' The nigger understands me, ye see, and moves off, as if he expected a thunderbolt at his heel, lookin' back and whining like a puppy what's lost his mother. Just when he gets to an honourable distance,—say twenty paces, according to fighting rule,—I draws up, takes aim, and plumps the plugs into him. The way the critter

jumps reminds me of a circus rider vaultin' and turnin' summersets. You'd think he was inginrubber 'lectrified. A'ter all, I finds these playin' doses don't do; they don't settle things on the square. So I tries a little stronger mixture, which ends in killin' three a' Mack's niggers right up smooth. But the best on't is that Mack finds he han't no proof, goes right into it and kills three a' my prime fat niggers: that makes us bad friends on every score. But he got a nigger ahead a' me a'ter awhile, and I ware detarmined to straighten accounts, if it was by stealin' the odds. Them ar's my principles, and that's just the way I settles accounts with folks what don't do the square thing in the way a' nigger property."

Thus the two gentlemen lived in the terror of internal war; and Romescos, seeing such a fine piece of property pass into the hands of his antagonist, resolved on squaring accounts by stealing the preacher,—an act Mr. McFadden least expected.

The candidates' festival offered every facility for carrying this singular *coup-d'état* into effect. Hence, with the skilful assistance of Nath. Nimrod, and Dan Bengal, Harry was very precipitately and dexterously passed over to the chances of a new phase of slave life.

Ellen waited patiently for Harry's return until it became evident some ill-luck had befallen him. Lantern in hand, she proceeds to the pen in search. No Harry is to be found there; Mr. McFadden's common negroes only are there, and they sleep sweetly and soundly. What can have befallen him? She conjectures many things, none of which are the right. The lock is upon the door; all is still outside; no traces of kidnapping can be found. She knows his

faithfulness,—knows he would not desert his master unless some foul means had been used to decoy him into trouble. She returns to the house and acquaints her master. ‘

Straggling members, who had met to enjoy the generous political banquet, and who still remain to see the night “through” with appropriate honour, are apprised of the sudden disappearance of this very valuable piece of property. They are ready for any turn of excitement,—anything for “topping off” with a little amusement; and to this end they immediately gather round mine host in a party of pursuit. Romescos (he must make his innocence more imposing) has been conspicuous during the night, at times expressing sympathy for Mr. M’Fadden, and again assuring the company that he has known fifty worse cases cured. In order to make this better understood, he will pay the doctor’s bill if M’Fadden dies. Mine host has no sooner given the alarm than Romescos expresses superlative surprise. He was standing in the centre of a conclave of men, whom he harangues on the particular political points necessary for the candidates to support in order to maintain the honour of the State; now he listens to mine host as he recounts the strange absence of the preacher, pauses and combs his long red beard with his fingers, looks distrustfully, and then says, with a quaintness that disarmed suspicion, “Nigger-like!—preacher or angel, nigger will be nigger! The idea a’ makin’ the black rascals preachers, thinkin’ they won’t run away! Now, fellers, that ar’ chap’s skulkin’ about, not far off, out among the pines; and here’s my two dogs (he points to his dogs, stretched on the floor), what’ll scent him and bring him out afore ten minutes! Don’t say a word to Mack about it; don’t let it ’scape yer fly-trap, eos

they say he's got a notion a' dying, and suddenly changed his feelins 'bout nigger tradin'. There's no tellin' how it would affect the old democrat if he felt he warnt goin' to slip his breeze. This child (Romescos refers to himself) felt just as Mack does more nor a dozen times, when Davy Jones looked as if he was making slight advances: a feller soon gets straight again, nevertheless. It's only the difference atween one's feelings about makin' money when he's well, and thinkin' how he made it when he's about to bid his friends good morning and leave town for awhile. Anyhow, there aint no dodging now, fellers! We got to hunt up the nigger afore daylight, so let us take a drop more and be moving." He orders the landlord to set on the decanters,—they join in a social glass, touch glasses to the recovery of the nigger, and then rush out to the pursuit. Romescos heads the party. With dogs, horses, guns, and all sorts of negro-hunting apparatus, they scour the pine-grove, the swamp, and the bether. They make the pursuit of man full of interest to those who are fond of the chase; they allow their enthusiasm to bound in unison with the sharp baying of the dogs.

For more than two hours is this exhilarating sport kept up. It is sweet music to their ears; they have been trained (educated) to the fascination of a man-hunt, and dogs and men become wearied with the useless search.

Romescos declares the nigger is near at hand: he sees the dogs curl down their noses; he must be somewhere in a hole or jungle of the swamp, and, with more daylight and another dog or two, his apprehension is certain. He makes a halt on the brow of a hill, and addresses his fellow-hunters from the saddle. In his wisdom on nigger nature he will

advise a return to the tavern—for it is now daylight—where they will spend another hour merrily, and then return brightened to the pursuit. Acting on this advice, friends and foes (both join'as good fellows in the chase for a nigger) followed his retreat as they had his advance.

“No nigger preacher just about this circle, Major!” exclaims Romescos, addressing mine host, as he puts his head into the bar-room, on his return. “Feller’s burrowed somewhere, like a coon: catch him on the broad end of morning, or I’ll hang up my old double-barrel,” he concludes, shaking his head, and ordering drink for the party at his expense.

The morning advanced, however, and nothing was to be seen of Romescos: he vanished as suddenly from among them as Harry had from the pen. Some little surprise is expressed by the knowing ones; they whisper among themselves, while mine host reaches over the counter, cants his head solicitously, and says:—“What’s that, gentlemen?”

In this dilemma they cannot inform mine host; they must continue the useless chase without Romescos’ valuable services. And here we must leave mine host preparing further necessaries for capturing the lost property, that he may restore it to its owner so soon as he shall become convalescent, and turn to Harry.

Like a well-stowed bale of merchandise, to be delivered at a stated place within a specified time, he was rolled in bagging, and not permitted to see the direction in which he was being driven. When the pursuing party started from the crossing, Romescos took the lead in order to draw it in an opposite direction, and keep the dogs from the trail. This would allow the stolen clergyman to get beyond their

reach. When daylight broke upon the capturers they were nearly twenty miles beyond the reach of the pursuers, approaching an inn by the road side. The waggon suddenly stopped, and Harry found himself being unrolled from his winding sheet by the hands of two strangers. Lifting him to his feet, they took him from the waggon, loosed the chains from his legs, led him into the house, and placed him in a dark back room. Here, his head being uncovered, he looks upon his captors with an air of confusion and distrust. "Ye know me too, I reckon, old feller, don't ye?" enquires one of the men, with a sardonic grin, as he lifts his hat with his left hand, and scratches his head with his right.

"Yes, mas'r: there's no mistakin on ye!" returns Harry, shaking his head, as they release the chains from his hands. He at length recognises the familiar faces of Dan-Bengal and Nath. Nimrod. Both have figured about Marston's plantation, in the purchase and sale of negroes.

"Ye had a jolly good ride, old feller, had'nt ye?" says Bengal, exultingly, looking Harry in the face, shrugging his shoulders, and putting out his hand to make his friendship.

Harry has no reply to make; but rubs his face as if he is not quite satisfied with his new apartment, and wants to know a little more of the motive of the expedition. "Mas'r! I don't seem to know myself, ner nothin? Please tell me where I am going to, and who is to be my master? It will relieve my double troubles," he says, casting an enquiring look at Nimrod.

"Shook up yer parson-thinkin' some, I reckon, did'nt it, old chap?" returns Nimrod, laughing heartily, but making no further reply. He thinks it was very much like riding in a railroad backwards.

"Did my sick mas'r sell me to you?" again he enquires.

"No business a' yourn, that ain't; yer nigger-knowin ought to tell you how ye'd got into safe hands. We'll push along down south as soon as ye gets some feed. Put on a straight face, and face the music like a clever deacon, and we'll do the square in selling ye to a Boss what 'll let ye preach now and then. (Nimrod becomes very affectionate). Do the thing up righteous, and when yer sold there 'll be a five-dollar shiner for yerself. (He pats him on the head, and puts his arm over his shoulder.) Best t' have a little shot in a body's own pocket; now, shut up yer black bread-trap, and don't go makin a fuss about where yer goin' to: that's my business!"

Harry pauses as if in contemplation; he is struggling against his indignation excited by such remarks. He knew his old master's weaknesses, enjoyed his indulgences; but he had never been made to feel so acutely how degraded he could be as a mere article of trade. It would have been some consolation to know which way he was proceeding, and why he had been so suddenly snatched from his new owner. Fate had not ordained this for him; oh no! He must resign himself without making any further enquiries; he must be nothing more than a nigger—happy nigger happily subdued! Seating himself upon the floor, in a recumbent position, he drops his face on his knees,—is humbled among the humblest. He is left alone for some time, while his captors, retiring into an adjoining room, hold a consultation.

Breakfast is being prepared, and much conversation is kept up in an inaudible tone of voice. Harry has an instinctive knowledge that it is about him, for he hears the

words, "Peter! Peter!" his name must be transmogrified into "Peter!" In another minute he hears dishes rattling on the table, and Bengal distinctly complimenting the adjuncts, as he orders some for the nigger preacher. This excites his anxiety; he feels like placing his ear at the key-hole,—doing a little evesdropping. He is happily disappointed, however, for the door opens, and a black boy bearing a dish of homony enters, and, placing it before him, begs that he will help himself. Harry takes the plate and sets it beside him, as the strange boy watches him with an air of commiseration that enlists his confidence. "Ain't da'h somefin mo' dat I can bring ye?" enquires the boy, pausing for an answer.

"Nothing,—nothing more!"

Harry will venture to make some enquiries about the locality. "Do you belong to master what live here?" He puts out his hand, takes the other by the arm.

"Hard tellin' who I belongs to. Buckra man own 'em to-day; ain't sartin if he own 'em to-morrow, dough. What country-born nigger is you?"

"Down country! My poor old master's gone, and now I'm goin'; but God only knows where to. White man sell all old Boss's folks in a string,—my old woman and children among the rest. My heart is with them, God bless them!"

"Reckón how ya' had a right good old Boss what larn ye somethin'" (the boy listens to Harry with surprise). "Don't talk like dat down dis a way; no country-born nigger put in larn'd wods so, nohow," returns the boy, with a look of curious admiration.

"But you harn't told me what place this is?"

"Dis 'ouse! e' ant nowhare when Buckra bring nigger what he want to sell, and don' want nobody to know whar e' bring him from. Dat man what bring ye here be great Buckra. De 'h way he lash nigger whin e' don do jist so!" The boy shakes his head with a warning air.

"How did you get here? There must be roads leading in some directions?"

"Roads runnin' every which way, yand'r; and trou de woods anyway, but mighty hard tellin whar he going to, he is. Mas'r Boss don lef 'e nigger know how 'e bring 'um, nor how he takes 'um way. Guess da 'h gwine to run ye down country, so God bless you," says the boy, shaking him by the hand, and taking leave.

"Well! if I only knew which way I was going I should feel happy; because I could then write to my old master, somewhere or somehow. And I know my good friend Missus Rosebrook will buy me for her plantation,—I know she will. She knows my feelings: and in her heart wouldn't see me abused, she wouldn't! I wish I knew who my master is, where I am, and to whom I'm going to be sold next. I think new master has stolen me, thinking old master was going to die," Harry mutters to himself, commencing his breakfast, but still applying his listening faculties to the conversation in the next room. At length, after a long pause, they seem to have finished breakfast and taken up the further consideration of his sale.

"I don't fear anything of the kind! Romescos is just the keenest fellow that can be scared up this side of Baltimore. He never takes a thing a' this stamp in hand but what he puts it through," says Bengal, in a whispering tone.

"True! the trouble's in his infernal preaching; that's the devil of niggers having intelligence. Can do anything in our way with common niggers what don't know nothin'; but when the critters can do clergy, and preach, they'll be sending notes to somebody they know as acquaintances. An intelligent nigger's a bad article when ye want to play off in this way," replies the other, curtly.

"Never mind," returns Bengal, "can't al'a's transpose a nigger, as easy as turnin' over a sixpence, specially when he don't have his ideas brightened. Can't steer clear on't. Larnin's mighty dangerous to our business, Nath.—better knock him on the head at once; better end him and save a sight of trouble. It'll put a stopper on his preaching, this pested exercisin' his ideas."

A third interrupts. Thinks such a set of chicken-hearted fellows won't do when it comes to cases of 'mergency like this. He will just make clergyman Peter Somebody the deacon; and with this honorary title he'll put him through to Major Wiley's plantation, when he'll be all right down in old Mississippi. The Colonel and he, understanding the thing, can settle it just as smooth as sunrise. The curate is what we call a right clever fellow, would make the tallest kind of a preacher, and pay first-rate percentage on himself. Bengal refers to Harry. His remarks are, indeed, quite applicable. "I've got the dockermint, ye see, all prepared; and we'll put him through without a wink," he concludes, in a measured tone of voice.

The door of Harry's room opens, and the three enter together. "Had a good breakfast, old feller, hain't ye?" says Nimrod, approaching with hand extended, and patting him on the head with a child's playfulness. "I kind a likes

the looks on ye (a congratulatory smile curls over his countenance), old feller; and means to do the square thing in the way a' gettin' on ye a good Boss. Put on, the Lazarus, and no nigger tricks on the road. I'm sorry to leave ye on the excursion, but here's the gentleman what li see ye through,—will put ye through to old Mississipp just as safe as if ye were a nugget of gold." Nimrod introduces Harry to a short *gentleman* with a bald head, and very smooth, red face. His dress is of brown homespun, a garb which would seem peculiar to those who do the villainy of the peculiar institution. The gentleman has a pair of handcuffs in his left hand, with which he will make his pious merchandise safe. Stepping forward, he places the forefinger of his right hand on the preacher's forehead, and reads him a lesson which he must get firm into his thinking shell. It is this. "Now, at this very time, yer any kind of a nigger; but a'ter this ar' ye got to be a Tennessee nigger, raised in a pious Tennessee family. And yer name is Peter—Peter—Peter!—don't forget the Peter: yer a parson, and ought t' keep the old apostle what preached in the marketplace in yer noddle. Peter, ye see, is a pious name, and Harry isn't; so ye must think Peter and sink Harry."

"What do I want to change my name for? Old master give me that name long time ago!"

"None a' yer business; niggers ain't t' know the philosophy of such things. No nigger tricks, now!" interrupts Bengal, quickly, drawing his face into savage contortions. At this the gentleman in whose charge he will proceed steps forward and places the manacles on Harry's hands with the coolness and indifference of one executing the commonest branch of his profession. Thus packed and baled

for export, he is hurried from the house into a two-horse waggon, and driven off at full speed. Bengal watches the waggon as it rolls down the highway and is lost in the distance. He laughs heartily, thinks how safe he has got the preacher, and how much hard cash he will bring. God speed the slave on his journey downward, we might add.

It will be needless for us to trace them through the many incidents of their journey: our purpose will be served when we state that his new guardian landed him safely at the plantation of Major Wiley, on the Tallahatchee River, Mississippi, on the evening of the fourth day after their departure, having made a portion of their passage on the steamer Ohio. By some process unknown to Harry he finds himself duly ingratiated among the major's field hands, as nothing more than plain Peter. He is far from the high-road, far from his friends, without any prospect of communicating with his old master. The major, in his way, seems a well-disposed sort of man, inclined to "do right" by his negroes, and willing to afford them an opportunity of employing their time after task, for their own benefit. And yet it is evident that he must in some way be connected with Graspum and his party, for there is a continual interchange of negroes to and from his plantation. This, however, we must not analyse too closely, but leave to the reader's own conjectures, inasmuch as Major Wiley is a very distinguished gentleman, and confidently expects a very prominent diplomatic appointment under the next administration.

Harry, in a very quiet way, sets himself about gaining a knowledge of his master's opinions on religion, as well as obtaining his confidence by strict fidelity to his interests.

So far does he succeed, that in a short time he finds himself holding the respectable and confidential office of master of stores. Then he succeeds in inducing his master to hear him preach a sermon to his negroes. The major is perfectly willing to allow him the full exercise of his talents, and is moved to admiration at his fervency, his aptitude, his knowledge of the Bible, and the worth there must be in such a piece of clergy property. Master Wiley makes his man the offer of purchasing his time, which Harry, under the alias of Peter, accepts, and commences his mission of preaching on the neighbouring plantations.

Ardently and devoutly does he pursue his mission of Christianity among his fellow-bondmen; but he has reaped little of the harvest to himself, his master having so increased the demand for his time that he can scarcely save money enough to purchase clothes. At first he was only required to pay six dollars a week; now, nothing less than ten is received. It is a happy premium on profitable human nature; and through it swings the strongest hinge of that cursed institution which blasts alike master and slave. Major Wiley is very chivalrous, very hospitable, very distinguished for his many distinguished qualifications; but his very pious piece of property must pay forty-seven per cent. annual tribute for the very hospitable privilege of administering the Word of God to his brother bondmen. Speak not of robed bishops robing Christianity in a foreign land, ye men who deal in men, and would rob nature of its tombstone! Ye would rob the angels did their garments give forth gold.

The poor fellow's income, depending, in some measure, upon small presents bestowed by the negroes to whom he

preached, was scarcely enough to bring him out at the end of the week, and to be thus deprived of it seemed more than his spirits could bear. Again and again had he appealed to his master for justice; but there was no justice for him,—his appeals proved as fruitless as the wind, on his master's distinguished feelings. Instead of exciting compassion, he only drew upon him his master's prejudices; he was threatened with being sold, if he resisted for a day the payment of wages for his own body. Hence he saw but one alternative left—one hope, one smile from a good woman, who might, and he felt would, deliver him; that was in writing to his good friend, Mrs. Rosebrook, whose generous heart he might touch through his appeals for mercy. And yet there was another obstacle; the post-office might be ten miles off, and his master having compelled him to take the name of Peter Wiley, how was he to get a letter to her without the knowledge of his master? Should his letter be intercepted, his master, a strict disciplinarian, would not only sell him farther south, but inflict the severest punishment. Nevertheless, there was one consolation left; his exertions on behalf of the slaves, and his earnestness in promoting the interests of their masters, had not passed unnoticed with the daughter of a neighbouring planter (this lady has since distinguished herself for sympathy with the slave), who became much interested in his welfare. She had listened to his exhortations with admiration; she had counselled his advice on religion, and become his friend and confidant. She would invite him to her father's house, sit for hours at his side, and listen with breathless attention to his pathos, his display of natural genius. To her he unfolded his deep and painful troubles; to her he looked for consola-

tion; she was the angel of light guiding him on his weary way, cheering his drooping soul on its journey to heaven. To her he disclosed how he had been called to the bedside of his dying master; how, previously, he had been sold from his good old master, Marston, his wife, his children; how he was mysteriously carried off and left in the charge of his present master, who exacts all he can earn.

The simple recital of his story excites the genial feelings of the young lady; she knows some foul transaction is associated with his transition, and at once tenders her services to release him. But she must move cautiously, for even Harry's preaching is in direct violation of the statutes; and were she found aiding in that which would unfavourably affect the interests of his master she would be subjected to serious consequences—perhaps be invited to spend a short season at the sheriff's hotel, commonly called the county gaol. However, there was virtue in the object to be served, and feeling that whatever else she could do to relieve him would be conferring a lasting benefit on a suffering mortal, she will brave the attempt.

"Tell me he is not a man, but a slave! tell me a being with such faculties should be thus sunken beneath the amenities of freedom! that man may barter almighty gifts for gold! trample his religion into dust, and turn it into dollars and cents! What a mockery is this against the justice of heaven! When this is done in this our happy land of happy freedom, scoffers may make it their foot-ball, and kings in their tyranny may point the finger of scorn at us, and ask us for our honest men, our cherished freedom!

"Woman can do something, if she will; let me see what I

can do to relieve this poor oppressed," she exclaims one day, after he has consulted her on the best means of relief. "I will try."

Woman knows the beatings of the heart; she can respond more quickly to its pains and sorrows. Our youthful missionary will sit down and write a letter to Mrs. Rosebrook—she will do something,—the atmosphere of slavery will hear of her yet—it will!

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PRETTY CHILDREN ARE TO BE SOLD.

How varied are the sources of human nature—how changing its tints and glows—how immeasurable its uncertainties, and how obdurate the will that can turn its tenderest threads into profitable degradation! But what democrat can know himself a freeman when the whitest blood makes good merchandise in the market? When the only lineal stain on a mother's name for ever binds the chains, let no man boast of liberty. The very voice re-echoes, oh, man, why be a hypocrite! can'st thou not see the scorner looking from above? But the oligarchy asks in tones so modest, so full of chivalrous fascination, what hast thou to do with that? be no longer a fanatic. So we will bear the warning—pass from it for the present.

More than two years have passed; writs of error have been filed and argued; the children have dragged out time in a prison-house. Is it in freedom's land a prison was made for the innocent to waste in? So it is, and may Heaven one day change the tenour! Excuse, reader, this digression, and let us proceed with our narrative.

The morning is clear and bright; Mrs. Rosebrook sits at the window of her cheerful villa, watching the approach of the post-rider seen in the distance, near a cluster of oaks

PLATE V.



“ TWO YEARS HAVE PASSED;—HOW CHANGED !

that surround the entrance of the harbour, at the north side of the garden. The scene spread out before her is full of rural beauty, softened by the dew-decked foliage, clothing the landscape with its clumps. As if some fairy hand had spread a crystal mist about the calm of morning, and angels were bedecking it with the richest tints of a rising sun at morn, the picture sparkles with silvery life. There she sits, her soft glowing eyes scanning the reposing scene, as her graceful form seems infusing spirit into its silent loveliness. And then she speaks, as if whispering a secret to the wafting air: "our happy *union*!" It falls upon the ear like some angel voice speaking of things too pure, too holy for the caprices of earth. She would be a type of that calmness pervading the scene—that sweetness and repose which seem mingling to work out some holy purpose; and yet there is a touching sadness depicted in her face.

"Two years have passed; how changed!" she exclaims, as if rousing from a reverie: "I would not be surprised if he brought bad tidings."

The postman has reached the gate and delivered a letter, which the servant quickly bears to her hand. She grasps it anxiously, as if recognising the superscription; opens it nervously; reads the contents. It is from Franconia, interceding with her in behalf of her uncle and the two children, in the following manner:—

"My dearest Friend,

"Can I appeal to one whose feelings are more ready to be enlisted in a good cause? I think not. I wish now to enlist your feelings in something that concerns myself. It is to save two interesting children, who, though our eyes

may at times be blinded to facts, I cannot forget are nearly allied to me by birth and association, from the grasp of slavery. Misfortune never comes alone; nor, in this instance, need I recount ours to you. Of my own I will say but little; the least is best. Into wedlock I have been sold to one it were impossible for me to love; he cannot cherish the respect due to my feelings. His associations are of the coarsest, and his heartless treatment beyond my endurance. He subjects me to the meanest grievances; makes my position more degraded than that of the slave upon whom he gratifies his lusts. Had my parents saved me from such a monster (I cannot call him less), they would have saved me many a painful reflection. As for his riches (I know not whether they really exist), they are destined only to serve his lowest passions. With him misfortune is a crime; and I am made to suffer under his taunts about the disappearance of my brother, the poverty of my parents.

“You are well aware of the verdict of the jury, and the affirmation of the Court of Appeal, upon those dear children. The decree orders them to be sold in the market, for the benefit of my uncle’s creditors: this is the day, the fatal day, the sale takes place. Let me beseech of you, as you have it in your power, to induce the deacon to purchase them. O, save them from the fate that awaits them! You know my uncle’s errors; you know also his goodness of heart; you can sympathise with him in his sudden downfall. Then the affection he has for Annette is unbounded. No father could be more dotingly fond of his legitimate child. But you know what our laws are—what they force us to do against our better inclinations. Annette’s mother, poor wretch, has fled, and M’Carstrow charges me with being

accessory to her escape : I cannot, nor will I, deny it, while my most ardent prayer invokes her future happiness. That she has saved herself from a life of shame I cannot doubt : and if I have failed to carry out a promise I made her before her departure—that of rescuing her child—the satisfaction of knowing that she at least is enjoying the reward of freedom partially repays my feelings. Let me entreat you to repair to the city, and, at least, rescue Annette from that life of shame and disgrace now pending over her—a shame and disgrace no less black in the sight of heaven because society tolerates it as among the common things of social life.

“ I am now almost heart-broken, and fear it will soon be my lot to be driven from under the roof of Colonel McCastrow, which is no longer a home, but a mere place of durance to me. It would be needless for me here to recount his conduct. Were I differently constituted I might tolerate his abuse, and accept a villain's recompense in consideration of his wealth.

“ Go, my dear friend, save that child,

“ Is thy prayer of your affectionate

“ FRANCONIA.”

Mrs. Rosebrook reads and re-reads the letter ; then leaves a sigh as she lays it upon the table at her side. As if discussing the matter in her mind, her face resumes a contemplative seriousness.

“ And these children are to be sold in the market ! Who would they sell, and sanctify the act ? How can I relieve them ? how can I be their friend, for Franconia's sake ? My husband is away on the plantation, and I cannot leave the

coarse slang of a slave mart; I cannot mingle with those who there congregate.

"And, too, there are so many such cases (bearing on their front the fallacy of this our democracy), that however much one may have claims over another, it were impossible to take one into consideration without inciting a hundred to press their demands. In this sense, then, the whole accursed system would have to be uprooted before the remedy could be applied effectually. Notwithstanding, I will go: I will go: I'll see what can be done in the city," says Mrs. Rosebrook, bristling with animation. "Our ladies must have something to arouse their energies; they all have a deep interest to serve, and can do much:" she will summon resolution and brave all. Rising from her seat, she paces the room several times, and then orders a servant to command Uncle Bradshaw to get the carriage ready, and be prepared for a drive into the city.

Soon Bradshaw has got the carriage ready, and our good lady is on the road, rolling away toward the city. As they approach a curvature that winds round a wooded hill, Bradshaw intimates to "missus" that he sees signs of a camp a short distance ahead. He sees smoke curling upwards among the trees, and very soon the notes of a long-metre tune fall softly on the ear, like the tinkling of distant bells in the desert. Louder and louder, as they approach, the sounds become more and more distinct. Then our good lady recognises the familiar voice of Elder Pemberton Praiseworthy. This worthy christian of the Southern Church is straining his musical organ to its utmost capacity, in the hope there will be no doubt left on the minds of those congregated around him as to his very sound piety.

The carriage rounds the curvature, and there, encamped in a grove of pines by the road side, is our pious Elder, administering consolation to his infirm property. Such people ! they present one of the most grotesque and indiscriminate spectacles ever eyes beheld. The cholera has subsided ; the Elder's greatest harvest time is gone ; few victims are to be found for the Elder's present purposes. Now he is constrained to resort to the refuse of human property (those afflicted with what are called ordinary diseases), to keep alive the Christian motive of his unctuous business. To speak plainly, he must content himself with the purchase of such infirmity as can be picked up here and there about the country.

A fire of pine knots blazes in the centre of a mound, and over it hangs an iron kettle (on a straddle), filled with corn-grits. Around this, and anxiously watching its boiling, are the lean figures of negroes, with haggard and sickly faces, telling but too forcibly the tale of their troubles. They watch and watch, mutter in grumbling accents, stir the homony, and sit down again. Two large mule carts stand in the shade of a pine tree, a few yards from the fire. A few paces further on are the mules tethered, quietly grazing ; while, seated on a whiskey-keg, is the Elder, book in hand, giving out the hymn to some ten or a dozen infirm negroes seated round him on the ground. They have enjoyed much consolation by listening with wondrous astonishment to the Elder's exhortations, and are now ready to join their musical jargon to the words of a Watts's hymn.

On arriving opposite the spot, our good lady requests Bradshaw to stop ; which done, the Elder recognises her, and suddenly adjourning his spiritual exercises, advances to

meet her, his emotions expanding with enthusiastic joy. In his eagerness, with outstretched hand, he comes sailing along, trips his toe in a vine, and plunges head foremost into a broad ditch that separates the road from the rising ground.

The accident is very unfortunate at this moment; the Elder's enthusiasm is somewhat cooled, nevertheless; but, as there is seldom a large loss without a small gain, he finds himself strangely bespattered from head to foot with the ingredients of a quagmire.

"U'h! u'h! u'h! my dear madam, pardon me, I pray;—strange moment to meet with a misfortune of this kind. But I was so glad to see you?" he ejaculates, sensitively, making the best of his way out, brushing his sleeves, and wiping his face with his never-failing India handkerchief. He approaches the carriage, apologising for his appearance.

He hopes our lady will excuse him, having so far lost himself in his enthusiasm, which, together with the fervency and devotion of the spiritual exercises he was enjoying with his poor, helpless property, made him quite careless of himself. Begging a thousand pardons for presenting himself in such a predicament (his gallantry is proverbially southern), he forgets that his hat and spectacles have been dislodged by his precipitancy into the ditch.

The good lady reaches out her hand, as a smile curls over her face; but Bradshaw must grin; and grin he does, in right good earnest.

"Bless me, my dear Elder! what trade are you now engaged in?" she enquires.

"A little devotional exercises, my dear madam! We were enjoying them with so much christian feeling that I was

quite carried away, indeed I was!" He rubs his finger through his bristly hair, and then downwards to his nasal organ, feeling for his devoted glasses. He is surprised at their absence—makes another apology. He affirms, adding his sacred honour, as all real southerners do, that he had begun to feel justified in the belief that there never was a religion like that preached by the good apostles, when such rural spots as this (he points to his encampment) were chosen for its

administration. Everything around him made him feel so good, so much like the purest christian of the olden time. He tells her, with great seriousness, that we must serve God, and not forget poor human nature, never! To the world he would seem labouring under the influence of those inert convictions by which we strive to conceal our natural inclinations, while drawing the flimsy curtain of "*to do good*" over the real object.

He winks and blinks, rubs his eyes, works his face into all the angles and contortions it is capable of, and commences searching for his hat and spectacles. Both are necessary adjuncts to his pious appearance; without them there is that in the expression of his countenance from which none can fail to draw an unfavourable opinion of his real character. The haggard, care-worn face, browned to the darkest tropical tints; the ceaseless leer of that small, piercing eye, anxiety and agitation pervading the *tout ensemble* of the man, will not be dissembled. Nay; those acute promontories of the face, narrow and sharp, and that low, reclining forehead, and head covered with bristly iron-grey hair, standing erect in rugged tufts, are too strong an index of character for all the disguises Elder Pemberton Praiseworthy can invent.

"One minute, my dear madam," he exclaims, in his eagerness for the lost ornaments of his face.

"Never mind them, Elder; never mind them! In my eyes you are just as well without them," she rejoins, an ironical smile invading her countenance, and a curl of contempt on her lip. "But,—tell me what are you doing here?"

"Here! my dear madam? Doing good for mankind and the truth of religion. I claim merit of the parish, for my pursuit is laudable, and saves the parish much trouble," says the Elder, beginning to wax warm in the goodness of his pursuit, before anyone has undertaken to dispute him, or question the purity of his purpose.

"Still speculating in infirmity; making a resurrection man of yourself! You are death's strongest opponent; you fight the great slayer for small dollars and cents."

"Well, now," interrupts the Elder, with a serious smile, "I'd rather face a Mexican army than a woman's insinuating questions,—in matters of this kind! But it's business, ye see! according to law; and ye can't get over that. There's no getting over the law; and he that serveth the Lord, no matter how, deserveth recompense; my recompense is in the amount of life I saves for the nigger."

"That is not what I asked; you evade my questions. Elder! better acknowledge honestly, for the sake of the country, where did you pick up these poor wretches?"

"I goes round the district, madam, and picks up a cripple here, and a cancer case there, and a dropsy doubtful yonder; and then, some on em's got diseases what don't get out until one comes to apply medical skill. Shan't make much on these sort o' cases,——"

The lady interrupts him, by bidding him good morning, and advising him, whenever he affects to serve the Lord, to serve him honestly, without a selfish motive. She leaves the Elder to his own reflections, to carry his victim property to his charnel-house, where, if he save life for the enjoyment of liberty, he may serve the Lord to a good purpose. She leaves him to the care of the christian church of the South,—the church of christian slavery, the rules of which he so strictly follows.

As our good lady moves quickly away toward the city, the Elder looks up, imploringly, as if invoking the praise of heaven on his good deeds. He is, indeed, astonished, that his dear friend, the lady, should have made such a declaration so closely applied, so insinuating. That such should have escaped her lips when she must know that his very soul and intention is purity! "I never felt like making a wish before now; and now I wishes I was, or that my father had made me, a lawyer. I would defend my position in a legal sense then! I don't like lawyers generally, I confess; the profession's not as honourable as ours, and its members are a set of sharpers, who would upset gospel and everything else for a small fee, they would!" He concludes, as his eyes regrettingly wander after the carriage. The words have moved him; there is something he wishes to say, but can't just get the point he would arrive at. He turns away, sad at heart, to his sadder scenes. "I know that my Redeemer liveth," he sings.

In the city a different piece is in progress of performance. Papers, and all necessary preparations for procuring the smooth transfer of the youthful property, are completed; customers have begun to gather round the mart. Some are

searching among the negroes sent to the warehouse; others are inquiring where this property, advertised in the morning journals, and so strongly commented upon, may be found. They have been incited to examine, in consequence of the many attractions set forth in the conditions of sale.

There the two children sit, on a little seat near the vender's tribune. Old Aunt Dina, at the prison, has dressed Annette so neatly! Her white pinafore shines so brightly, is so neatly arranged, and her silky auburn locks curl so prettily, in tiny ringlets, over her shoulders; and then her round fair face looks so sweetly, glows with such innocent curiosity, as her soft blue eyes, deep with sparkling vivacity, wander over the strange scene. She instinctively feels that she is the special object of some important event. Laying her little hand gently upon the arm of an old slave that sits by her side, she casts shy glances at those admirers who stand round her and view her as a marketable article only.

"Auntie, where are they going to take me?" the child inquires, with a solicitous look, as she straightens the folds of her dress with her little hands.

"Gwine t' sell 'um," mumbles the old slave. "Lor', child, a'h wishes ye wa'h mine; reckon da'h wouldn't sell ye. T'ant much to sell nigger like I, nhow; but e' hurt my feelins just so 'twarnt right t' sell de likes a' ye." The old slave, in return, lays her hand upon Annette's head, and smooths her hair, as if solicitous of her fate. "Sell ye, child—sell ye?" she concludes, shaking her head.

"And what will they do with me and Nicholas when they get us sold?" continues the child, turning to Nicholas and taking him by the arm.

"Don' kno': perhaps save ye fo'h sinnin' agin de Lor'," is

the old slave's quick reply. She shakes her head doubtfully, and bursts into tears, as she takes Annette in her arms, presses her to her bosom, kisses and kisses her pure cheek. How heavenly is the affection of that old slave—how it rebukes our Christian mockery!

“Will they sell us where we can't see mother, auntie? I do want to see mother so,” says the child, looking up in the old slave's face. There seemed something too pure, too lovely, in the child's simplicity, as it prattled about its mother, for such purposes as it is about to be consigned to. “They do not sell white folks, auntie, do they? My face is as white as anybody's; and Nicholas's aunt black. I do want to see mother so! when will she come back and take care of me, auntie?”

“Lor', child,” interrupts the old negro, suppressing her emotions, “no use to ax dem questions ven ye gwine t' market. Buckra right smart at makin' nigger what bring cash.”

The child expresses a wish that auntie would take her back to the old plantation, where master, as mother used to call him, wouldn't let them sell her away off. And she shakes her head with an air of unconscious pertness; tells the old negro not to cry for her.

The crier's bell sounds forth its muddling peals to summon the customers; a grotesque mixture of men close round the stand. The old slave, as if from instinct, again takes Annette in her arms, presses and presses her to her bosom, looks compassionately in her face, and smiles while a tear glistens in her eyes. She is inspired by the beauty of the child: her heart bounds with affection for her tender years; she loves her because she is lovely; and she smiles upon her

as a beautiful image of God's creation. But the old slave grieves over her fate; her grief flows from the purity of the heart; she knows not the rules of the slave church.

Annette is born a child of sorrow in this our land of love and liberty; she is a democrat's daughter, cursed by the inconsistencies of that ever-praised democratic goodness. A child! nothing more than an item of common trade. It is even so; but let not happy democracy blush, for the child being merchandise, has no claims to that law of the soul which looks above the frigidity of slave statutes. What generosity is there in this generous land? what impulses of nature not quenched by force of public opinion, when the associations of a child like this (we are picturing a true story), her birth and blood, her clear complexion, the bright carnatic of her cheek, will not save her from the mercenary grasp of dollars and cents? It was the law; the law had made men demons, craving the bodies and souls of their fellow men. It was the white man's charge to protect the law and the constitution; and any manifestation of sympathy for this child would be in violation of a system which cannot be ameliorated without endangering the whole structure: hence the comments escaping from purchasers are only such as might have been expressed by the sporting man in his admiration of a finely proportioned animal.

"What a sweet child!" says one, as they close round.

"Make a woman when she grows up!" rejoins another, twirling his cane, and giving his hat an extra set on the side of his head.

"Take too long to keep it afore its valuable is developed; but it's a picture of beauty. Face would do to take draw-

ings from, it's so full of delicate outlines," interposes a third.

An old gentleman, with something of the ministerial in his countenance, and who has been very earnestly watching them for some time, thinks a great deal about the subject of slavery, and the strange laws by which it is governed just at this moment. He says, "One is inspired with a sort of admiration that unlocks the heart, while gazing at such delicacy and child-like sweetness as is expressed in the face of that child." He points his cane coldly at Annette. "It causes a sort of reaction in one's sense of right, socially and politically, when we see it mixed up with niggers and black ruffians to be sold."

"Must abide the laws, though," says a gentleman in black, on his left.

"Yes," returns our friend, quickly, "if such property could be saved the hands of speculators"—

"Speculators! Speculators!" rejoins the gentleman in black, knitting his brows.

"Yes; it's always the case in our society. The beauty of such property makes it dangerous about a well-ordained man's house. Our ladies, generally, have no sympathy with, and rather dislike its ill-gotten tendencies. The piety of the south amounts to but little in its influence on the slave population. The slave population generates its own piety. There is black piety and white piety; but the white piety effects little when it can dispose of poor black piety just as it pleases; and there's no use in clipping the branches off the tree while the root is diseased," concludes our ministerial-looking gentleman, who might have been persuaded himself

to advance a bid, were he not so well versed in the tenour of society that surrounded him.

During the above *ad interim* at the shambles, our good lady, Mrs. Rosebrook, is straining every nerve to induce a gentleman of her acquaintance to repair to the mart, and purchase the children on her account.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NATURE SHAMES ITSELF.

Mrs. ROSEBROOK sits in Mrs. Pringle's parlour. Mrs. Pringle is thought well of in the city of Charleston, where she resides, and has done something towards establishing a church union for the protection of orphan females. They must, however, be purely white, and without slave or base blood in their veins, to entitle them to admittance into its charitable precincts. This is upon the principle that slave blood is not acceptable in the sight of Heaven; and that allowing its admittance into this charitable earthly union would only be a sad waste of time and Christian love. Mrs. Pringle, however, feels a little softened to the good cause, and does hope Mrs. Rosebrook may succeed at least in rescuing the little girl. She has counselled Mr. Seabrook, commonly called Colonel Seabrook, a very distinguished gentleman, who has a very distinguished opinion of himself, having studied law to distinguish himself, and now and then merely practises it for his own amusement. Mr. Seabrook never gives an opinion, nor acts for his friends, unless every thing he does be considered distinguished, and gratuitously rendered.

"What will you do with such property, madam?" inquires the gentleman, having listened profoundly to her request.

"To save them from being sold into the hands of such men as Graspam and Romescos; it's the only motive I have."

she speaks gently : " I love the child ; and her mother still loves her : I am a mother."

" Remember, my dear lady, they are adjudged property by law ; and all that you can do for them won't save them, nor change the odour of negro with which it has stamped them."

" Of that I am already too well aware, Mr. Seabrook ; and I know, too, when once enslaved, how hard it is to unslave. Public sentiment is the worst slave we have ; unslave that, and the righteousness of heaven will give us hearts to save ourselves from the unrighteousness of our laws.

" Go, Mr. Seabrook, purchase the children for me, and you will soon see what ornaments of society I will make them !"

" Ornaments to our society !" interrupts Mr. Seabrook, pausing for a moment, as he places the fore-finger of his right hand upon his upper lip. " That would be a pretty consummation—at the south ! Make ornaments of our society !" Mr. Seabrook turns the matter over and over and over in his mind. " Of such things as have been pronounced property by law ! A pretty fix it would get our society into !" he rejoins, with emphasis. Mr. Seabrook shakes his head doubtfully, and then, taking three or four strides across the room, his hands well 'down in his nether pockets, relieves himself of his positive opinion. " Ah ! ah ! hem ! my dear madam," he says, " if you undertake the purchase of all that delicate kind of property—I mean the amount total, as it is mixed up—your head'll grow grey afore you get all the bills of sale paid up, my word for it ! That's my undisguised opinion, backed up by all the pale-faced property about the city."

" We will smite the opinion, Mr. Seabrook ; such have kept

our society where it now is. I am resolved to have those children. If you hesitate to act for me, I'll brave——"

"Don't say that, my dear lady. Let me remind you that it ill becomes a lady of the south to be seen at a slave-mart; more especially when such delicate property is for sale. Persons might be present who did not understand your motive, and would not only make rude advances, but question the propriety of your proceedings. You would lose caste, most surely."

Mrs. Rosebrook cares little for Mr. Seabrook's very learned opinion (knowing that learned opinions are not always the most sensible ones), and is seen arranging her bonnet hastily in a manner betokening her intention to make a bold front of it at the slave-mart. This is rather too much for Mr. Seabrook, who sets great value on his chivalrous virtues, and fearing they may suffer in the esteem of the softer sex, suddenly proffers his kind interposition, becomes extremely courteous, begs she will remain quiet, assuring her that no stone that can further her wishes shall be left unturned. Mr. Seabrook (frequently called the gallant colonel), makes one of his very best bows, adjusts his hat with exquisite grace, and leaves to exercise the wisest judgment and strictest faith at the man-market.

"Such matters are exceedingly annoying to gentlemen of my standing," says Mr. Seabrook, as deliberately he proceeds to the fulfilment of his promise. He is a methodical gentleman, and having weighed the matter well over in his legal mind, is deeply indebted to it for the conclusion that Mrs. Rosebrook has got a very unsystematised crotchet into her brain. "The exhibition of sympathy for 'niggers'—they're nothing else," says Mr. Seabrook, "much adds to"

that popular prejudice which is already placing her in an extremely delicate position." He will call to his aid some very nice legal tact, and by that never-failing unction satisfy the good lady.

When Mr. Seabrook enters the mart (our readers will remember that we have already described it), he finds the children undergoing a very minute examination at the hands of several slave-dealers. As Mr. Forshou, the very polite man-seller, is despatching the rougher quality of human merchandise, our hero advances to the children, about whose father he asks them unanswerable questions. How interesting the children look!—how like a picture of beauty Annette's cherub face glows forth! Being seriously concerned about the child, his countenance wears an air of deep thought. "Colonel, what's your legal opinion of such pretty property?" enquires Romescos, who advances to Mr. Seabrook, and, after a minute's hesitation, takes the little girl in his arms, rudely kissing her as she presses his face from her with her left hand, and poutingly wipes her mouth with her right.

"Pretty as a picture (Romescos has set the child down), but I wouldn't give seven coppers for both; for, by my faith, such property never does well." The gentleman shakes his head in return. "It's a pity they're made it out nigger, though,—it's so handsome. Sweet little creature, that child, I declare: her beauty would be worth a fortune on the stage, when she grows up."

Romescos touches Mr. Seabrook on the arm; remarks that such things are only good for certain purposes; although, one can make them pay if they know how to trade in them. 'But it wants, a man with a capable conscience to do the

business up profitably. "No chance o' your biddin' on 'um, is there, colonel?" he enquires, with a significant leer, folding his arms with the indifference of a field-marshal. After a few minutes' pause, during which Mr. Seabrook seems manufacturing an answer, he shrugs his shoulders, and takes a few pleasing steps, as if moved to a waltzing humour. "Don't scare up the like a' that gal-nigger every day," he adds. Again, as if moved by some sudden idea, he approaches Annette, and placing his hand on her head, continues: "If this ain't tumbling down a man's affairs by the run! Why, colonel, 'taint more nor three years since old Hugh Marston war looked on as the tallest planter on the Ashley; and he thought just as much a' these young 'uns as if their mother had belonged to one of the first families. Now—I pity the poor fellow!—because he tried to save 'em from being sold as slaves, they (his creditors) think he has got more property stowed away somewhere. They're going to cell him, just to try his talent at putting away things."

The "prime fellows" and wenches of the darker and coarser quality have all been disposed of; and the vender (the same gentlemanly man we have described selling Marston's undisputed property) now orders the children to be brought forward. Romescos, eagerly seizing them by the arms, brings them forward through the crowd, places them upon the stand, before the eager gaze of those assembled. Strangely placed upon the strange block, the spectators close in again, anxious to gain the best position for inspection: but little children cannot stand the gaze of such an assemblage: no; Annette turns toward Nicholas, and with a childish embrace throws her tiny arms about his

neck, buries her face on his bosom. The child of misfortune seeks shelter from that shame of her condition, the evidence of which is strengthened by the eager glances of those who stand round the shambles, ready to purchase her fate. Even the vender,—distinguished gentleman that he is, and very respectably allied by marriage to one of the “first families,”—is moved with a strange sense of wrong at finding himself in a position somewhat repugnant to his feelings. He cannot suppress a blush that indicates an innate sense of shame.

“Here they are, gentlemen! let no man say I have not done my duty. You have, surely, all seen the pedigree of these children set forth in the morning papers; and, now that you have them before you, the living specimen of their beauty will fully authenticate anything therein set forth,” the vender exclaims, affecting an appearance in keeping with his trade. Notwithstanding this, there is a faltering nervousness in his manner, betraying all his efforts at dissimulation. He reads the invoice of human property to the listening crowd, dilates on its specific qualities with powers of elucidation that would do credit to any member of the learned profession. This opinion is confirmed by Romescos, the associations of whose trade have gained for him a very intimate acquaintance with numerous gentlemen of that very honourable profession.

“Now, gentlemen,” continues the vender, “the honourable high sheriff is anxious, and so am I—and it’s no more than a feelin’ of deserving humanity, which every southern gentleman is proud to exercise—that these children be sold to good, kind, and respectable owners; and that they do not fall into the hands, as is generally the case, of men who

raise them up for infamous purposes. Gentlemen, I am decidedly opposed to making licentiousness a means of profit."

"That neither means you nor me," mutters Romescos, touching Mr. Scabrook on the arm, shaking his head knowingly, and stepping aside to Graspum, in whose ear he whispers a word. The very distinguished Mr. Graspum has been intently listening to the outpouring of the vender's simplicity. What sublime nonsense it seems to him! He suggests that it would be much more effectual if it came from the pulpit,—the southern pulpit!

"Better sell 'um to some deacon's family," mutters a voice in the crowd.

"That's precisely what we should like, gentlemen; any bidder of that description would get them on more favourable terms than a trader, he would," he returns, quickly. The man of feeling, now wealthy from the sale of human beings, hopes gentlemen will pardon his nervousness on this occasion. He never felt the delicacy of his profession so forcibly—never, until now! His countenance changes with the emotions of his heart; he blushes as he looks upon the human invoice, glances slyly over the corner at the children, and again at his customers. The culminating point of his profession has arrived; its unholy character is making war upon his better feelings. "I am not speaking ironically, gentlemen: any bidder of the description I have named will get these children at a satisfactory figure. Remember that, and that I am only acting in my office for the honourable sheriff and the creditors," he concludes.

"If that be the case," Mr. Scabrook thinks to himself, "it's quite as well. Our good lady friend will be fully

satisfied. She only wants to see them in good hands: deacons are just the fellows." He very politely steps aside, lights his choice habanero, and sends forth its curling fumes as the bidding goes on.

A person having the appearance of a country gentleman, who has been some time watching the proceedings, is seen to approach Graspum: this dignitary whispers something in his ear, and he leaves the mart.

"I say, squire!" exclaims Romescos, addressing himself to the auctioneer, "do you assume the responsibility of making special purchasers? perhaps you had better keep an eye to the law and the creditors, you had! (Romescos's little red face fires with excitement.) No objection t' yer sellin' the gal to deacons and elders,—even to old Elder Pemberton Praiseworthy, who's always singing, 'I know that my Redeemer cometh!' But the statutes give me just as good a right to buy her, as any first-class deacon. I knows law, and got lots a' lawyer friends" "

"The issue is painful enough, without any interposition from you, my friend," rejoins the vender, interrupting Romescos in his conversation. After a few minutes pause, during which time he has been watching the faces of his customers, he adds: "Perhaps, seeing how well mated they are, gentlemen will not let them be separated. They have been raised together."

"Certainly!" again interrupts Romescos, "it would be a pity to separate them, 'cos' it might touch somebody's heart."

"Ah, that comes from Romescos; we may judge of its motive as we please," rejoins the man of feeling, taking Arnette by the arm and leading her to the extreme edge of

the stand. "Make us a bid, gentlemen, for the pair. I can see in the looks of my customers that nobody will be so hard-hearted as to separate them. What do you offer? say it! Start them; don't be bashful, gentlemen!"

"Rather cool for a hard-faced nigger-seller! Well, squire, say four hundred dollars and the treats,—that is, s'posin' ye don't double my bid cos I isn't a deacon. Wants the boy t' make a general on when he grows up; don't want the gal at all. Let the deacon here (he points to the man who was seen whispering to Graspum) have her, if he wants." The deacon, as Romescos calls him, edges his way through the crowd up to the stand, and looks first at the vender and then at the children. Turning his head aside, as if it may catch the ears of several bystanders, Romescos whispers, "That's deacon Staggers, from Pineville."

"Like your bid; but I'm frank enough to say I don't wan't you to have them, Romescos," interposes the auctioneer, with a smile.

"Four hundred and fifty dollars!" is sounded by a second bidder. The vender enquires, "For the two?"

"Yes! the pair on 'em," is the quick reply.

"Four hundred and fifty dollars!" re-echoes the man of feeling. "What good democrats you are! Why, gentlemen, it's not half the value of them. You must look upon this property in a social light; then you will see its immense value. It's intelligent, civil, and promisingly handsome; sold for no fault, and here you are hesitating on a small bid.

"Only four hundred and fifty dollars for such property, in this enlightened nineteenth century?"

"Trade will out, like murder. Squire wouldn't sell 'em to nobody but a deacon a few minutes ago!" is heard coming from a voice in the crowd. The vender again pauses, blushes, and contorts his face: he cannot suppress the zest of his profession; it is uppermost in his feelings.

Romescos says it is one of the squire's unconscious mistakes. There is no use of humbugging; why not let them run off to the highest bidder?

"The deacon has bid upon them; why not continue his advance?" says Mr. Seabrook, who has been smoking his cigar the while.

"Oh, well! secin' how it's the deacon, I won't stand agin his bid. It's Deacon Staggers of Pineville; nobody doubts his generosity," ejaculates Romescos, in a growling tone. The bids quicken,—soon reach six hundred dollars.

"Getting up pretty well, gentlemen! You must not estimate this property upon their age; it's the likeliness and the promise."

"Six hundred and twenty-five!" mutters the strange gentleman they call Deacon Staggers from Pineville.

"All right," rejoins Romescos; "just the man what ought to have 'em. I motion every other bidder withdraw in deference to the deacon's claim," rejoins Romescos, laughing.

The clever vender gets down from the stand, views the young property from every advantageous angle, dwells upon the bid, makes further comments on its choiceness, and after considerable bantering, knocks them down to—— "What name, sir?" he enquires, staring at the stranger vacantly.

"Deacon Staggers," replies the man, with a broad grin.

Romescos motions him aside,—slips a piece of gold into his hand; it is the price of his pretensions.

The clerk enters his name in the sales book: “Deacon Staggers, of Pineville, bought May 18th, 18—

“Two children, very likely: boy, prime child, darkish hair, round figure, intelligent face, not downcast, and well outlined in limb. Girl, very pretty, bluish eyes, flaxen hair, very fair and very delicate. Price 625 dollars. Property of Hugh Marston, and sold per order of the sheriff of the county, to satisfy two *fi fas* issued from the Court of Common Pleas, &c. &c. &c.”

An attendant now steps forward, takes the children into his charge, and leads them away. To where? The reader may surmise to the gaol. No, reader, not to the gaol; to Marco Graspum’s slave-pen,—to that pent-up hell where the living are tortured unto death, and where yearning souls are sold to sink!

Thus are the beauties of this our democratic system illustrated • in two innocent children being consigned to the miseries of slave life because a mother is supposed a slave: a father has acknowledged them, and yet they are sold before his eyes. It is the majesty of slave law, before which good men prostrate their love of independence. Democracy says the majesty of that law must be carried out; creditors must be satisfied, even though all that is generous and noble in man should be crushed out, and the rights of free men consigned to oblivion. A stout arm may yet rise up in a good cause; democrats may stand ashamed of the inhuman traffic, and seek to cover its poisoning head with artifices and pretences; but they write only an obituary for the curse •

“A quaint-faced, good-looking country deacon has bought them. Very good; I can now go home, and relieve Mrs. Rosebrook’s very generous feelings,” says the very distinguished Mr. Scabrook, shrugging his shoulders, lighting a fresh cigar, and turning toward home with a deliberate step, full of good tidings.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE VISION OF DEATH HAS PAST.

MR. SEABROOK returns to the mansion, and consoles the anxious lady by assuring her the children have been saved from the hands of obnoxious traders—sold to a good, country deacon. He was so delighted with their appearance that he could not keep from admiring them, and does not wonder the good lady took so great an interest in their welfare. He knows the ministerial-looking gentleman who bought them is a kind master; he has an acute knowledge of human nature, and judges from his looks. And he will further assure the good lady that the auctioneer proved himself a gentleman—every inch of him! He wouldn't take a single bid from a trader, not even from old Graspum (he dreads to come in contact with such a brute as he is, when he gets his eye on a good piece o' nigger property), with all his money. As soon as he heard the name of a deacon among the bidders, something in his heart forbad his bidding against him.

"You were not as good as your word, Mr. Seabrook," says the good lady, still holding Mr. Seabrook by the hand. "But, are you sure there was no disguise about the sale?"

"Not the least, madam!" interrupts Mr. Seabrook, emphatically. "Bless me, madam, our people are too sensitive not to detect anything of that kind; and too generous to allow it if they did discover it. The children—my heart

feels for them—are in the very best hands; will be brought up just as pious and morally. Can't go astray in the hands of a deacon—that's certain!" Mr. Seabrook rubs his hands, twists his fingers in various ways, and gives utterance to words of consolation, most blandly. The anxious lady seems disappointed, but is forced to accept the assurance.

We need scarcely tell the reader how intentionally Mr. Seabrook contented himself with the deception practised at the mart, nor with what freedom he made use of that blandest essence of southern assurance,—extreme politeness, to deceive the lady. She, however, had long been laudably engaged in behalf of a down-trodden race; and her knowledge of the secret workings of an institution which could only cover its monstrosity with sophistry and fraud impressed her with the idea of some deception having been practised. She well knew that Mr. Seabrook was one of those very contented gentlemen who have strong faith in the present, and are willing to sacrifice the future, if peace and plenty be secured to their hands. He had many times been known to listen to the advice of his confidential slaves, and even to yield to their caprices. And, too, he had been known to decry the ill-treatment of slaves by brutal and inconsiderate masters; but he never thinks it worth while to go beyond expressing a sort of rain-water sympathy for the maltreated. With those traits most prominent in his character, Annette and Nicholas were to him mere merchandise; and whatever claims to freedom they might have, through the acknowledgments of a father, he could give them no consideration, inasmuch as the law was paramount, and the great conservator of the south.

Our worthy benefactress felt the force of the above, in his

reluctance to execute her commands, and the manner in which he faltered when questioned about the purchase. Returning to her home, weighing the circumstances, she resolves to devise some method of ascertaining the true position of the children. "Women are not to be outdone," she says to herself.

We must again beg the reader's indulgence while accompanying us in a retrograde necessary to the connection of our narrative. When we left Mr. M'Fadden at the crossing, more than two years ago, he was labouring under the excitement of a wound he greatly feared would close the account of his mortal speculations.

On the morning following that great political gathering, and during the night Harry had so singularly disappeared, the tavern was rife with conjectures. On the piazza and about the "bar-room" were a few stupefied and half-insensible figures stretched upon benches, or reclining in chairs, their coarse garments rent into tatters, and their besotted faces resembling as many florid masks grouped together to represent some demoniacal scene among the infernals; others were sleeping soundly beside the tables, or on the lawn. With filthy limbs bared, they snored with painful discord, in superlative contempt of everything around. Another party, reeking with the fumes of that poisonous drug upon which candidates for a people's favours had built their high expectations, were leaning carelessly against the rude counter of the "bar-room," casting wistful glances at the fascinating bottles so securely locked within the lattice-work in the corner. Oaths of touching horror are mingling with loud calls for slave attendants, whose presence they wait to quench their burning thirst. Reader! digest the moral.

In this human menagerie—in this sink of besotted degradation—lay the nucleus of a power by which the greatest interests of state are controlled.

A bedusted party 'of mounted men have returned from a second ineffectual attempt to recover the lost preacher: the appearance of responsibility haunts mine host. He assured Mr. Lawrence M'Fadden that his property would be perfectly secure under the lock of the corn-shed. And now his anxiety exhibits itself in the readiness with which he supplies dogs, horses, guns, and such implements as are necessary to hunt down an unfortunate minister of the gospel. What makes the whole thing worse, was the report of M'Fadden having had a good sleep and awaking much more comfortable; that there was little chance of the fortunate issue of his death. In this, mine host saw the liability increasing two-fold.

He stands his important person, (hat off, face red with expectancy, and hands thrust well down "into his breeches pocket), on the top step of the stairs leading to the veranda, and hears the unfavourable report with sad discomfiture. "That's what comes of making a preacher of a slave! Well! I've done all I can. It puts all kinds of devilry about runnin' away into their heads," he ventures to assert, as he turns away, re-enters the "bar-room," and invites all his friends to drink at his expense.

"Mark what I say, now, Squire Jones. The quickest way to catch that ar' nigger's just to lay low and keep whist. He's a pious nigger; and a nigger can't keep his pious a'tween his teeth, no more nor a blackbird can his chattering. The feller 'll feel as if he wants to redeem somebody; and stein how 'tis so, if ye just watch close

some Sunday ye'll nab the fellow with his own pious bait. Can catch a pious runaway nigger 'most any time; the brute never knows enough to keep it to himself," says a flashily dressed gent, as he leaned against the counter, squinted his eye with an air of ponderous satisfaction, and twirled his tumbler round and round on the counter. "'Pears to me," he continues, quizzically, "Squire, you've got a lot a' mixed cracker material here what it 'll be a hard manufactor to make dependable voters on 'lection day:" he casts a look at the medley of sleepers.

"I wish the whole pack on 'em was sold into slavery, I do! They form six-tenths of the voters in our state, and are more ignorant, and a great deal worse citizens, than our slaves. Bl— 'em, there isn't one in fifty can read or write, and they're impudenter than the Governor."

"Hush! hush! squire. 'Twon't do to talk so. There ain't men nowhere stand on dignity like them fellers; they are the very bone-and-siners of the unwashed, hard-fisted democracy. The way they'd pull this old tavern down, if they heard reflections on their honour, would be a caution to storms. But how 's old iron-sided M'Fadden this morning? Begins to think of his niggers, I reckon;" interrupts the gent, to which mine host shakes his head, despondingly. Mine host wishes M'Fadden, nigger, candidates and all, a very long distance from his place.

"I s'pose he thinks old Death, with his grim visage, ain't going to call for him just now. That's al'a's the way with northerners, who lives atween the hope of something above, and the love of makin money below: they never feel bad about the conscience until old Davy Jones, Esq.

the gentleman with the horns and tail, takes them by the nose, and says—come!”

“I have struck an idea,” says our worthy host, suddenly *striking his hand on the counter*. “I will put up a poster. I will offer a big reward. T’other property’s all safe: there’s only the preacher missing.

“Just the strike! Give us yer hand, squire!” The gent reaches his hand across the counter, and smiles while cordially embracing mine host. “Make the reward about two hundred, so I can make a good week’s work for the dogs and me. Got the best pack in the parish; one on ’em knows as much as most clergymen, he does!” he very deliberately concludes, displaying a wonderful opinion of his own nigger-catching philosophy.

And Mr. Jones, such is mine host’s name, immediately commenced exercising his skill in composition on a large poster, which with a good hour’s labour he completes, and posts upon the ceiling of the “bar-room,” just below an enormously illustrated Circus bill.

“There! now ’s a chance of some enterprise and some sense. There’s a deuced nice sum, to be made, at that!” says Mr. Jones, emphatically, as he stands a few steps back, and reads aloud the following sublime outline of his genius:—

“GREAT INDUCEMENT FOR SPORTSMEN.

Two Hundred Dollars Reward.

The above reward will be given anybody for the apprehension of the nigger-boy, Harry, the property of Mr. McFadden. Said Harry suddenly disappeared from these premises last night, while his master was

supposed to be dying. The boy's a well-developed nigger, 'ant sassy, got fine bold head and round face, and intelligent eye, and 's about five feet eleven inches high, and equally proportionate elsewhere. He 's much giv'n to preachin', and most likely is secreted in some of the surrounding swamps, where he will remain until tempted to make his appearance on some plantation for the purpose of exortin his feller niggers. He is well disposed, and is said to have a good disposition, so that no person need fear to approach him for capture. The above reward will be paid upon his delivery at any gaol in the State, and a hundred and fifty dollars if delivered at any gaol out of the State

“JETHRO JONES.”

“Just the instrument to bring him, Jethro!” intimates our fashionable gent, quizzically, as he stands a few feet behind Mr. Jones, making grimaces. Then, gazing intently at the bill for some minutes, he runs his hands deep into his pockets, affects an air of greatest satisfaction, and commences whistling a tune to aid in suppressing a smile that is invading his countenance. “Wouldn’t be in that nigger’s skin for a thousand or more dollars, I wouldn’t!” he continues, screaming in the loudest manner, and then shaking, kicking, and rousing the half-animate occupants of the floor and benches. “Come! get up here! Prize money ahead! Fine fun for a week. Prize money ahead! wake up, ye jolly sleepers, loyal citizens, independent voters—wake up, I say. Here’s fun and frolic, plenty of whiskey, and two hundred dollars reward for every mother’s son of ye what wants to hunt a nigger; and he’s a preachin nigger at that! Come;

whose in for the frolic, ye hard-faced democracy that love to vote for your country's good and a good cause?" After exerting himself for some time, they begin to scramble up like so many bewildered spectres of blackness, troubled to get light through the means of their bleared faculties.

"Whose dragging the life out a' me?" exclaims one, straining his mottled eyes, extending his wearied limbs, gasping as if for breath; then staggering to the counter. Finally, after much struggling, staggering, expressing consternation, obscene jeering, blasphemous oaths and filthy slang, they stand upright, and huddle around the notice. The picture presented by their ragged garments, their woe-begone faces, and their drenched faculties, would, indeed, be difficult to transfer to canvas.

"Now, stare! stare! with all yer fire-stained eyes, ye clan of motley vagrants—ye sovereign citizens of a sovereign state. Two hundred dollars! aye, two hundred dollars for ye. Make plenty o' work for yer dogs; knowin brutes they are. And ye'll get whiskey enough to last the whole district more nor a year," says our worthy Jones, standing before them, and pointing his finger at the notice. They, as if doubting their own perceptibilities, draw nearer and nearer, straining their eyes, while their bodies oscillate against each other.

Mine host tells them to consider the matter, and be prepared for action, while he will proceed to M'Fadden's chamber and learn the state of his health.

He opens the sick man's chamber, and there, to his surprise, is the invalid gentleman, deliberately taking his tea and toast. Mine host congratulates him upon his appearance, extends his hand, takes a seat by his bed-side.

"I had fearful apprehensions about you, my friend," he says.

"So had I about myself. I thought I was going to slip it in right earnest. My thoughts and feelings—how they wandered!" M'Fadden raises his hand to his forehead, and slowly shakes his head. "I wouldn't a' given much for the chances, at one time; but the wound isn't so bad, after all. My nigger property gets along all straight, I suppose?" he enquires, coolly, rolling his eyes upwards with a look of serious reflection. "Boy preacher never returned last night. It's all right, though, I suppose?" again he enquired, looking mine host right in the eye, as if he discovered some misgiving. His seriousness soon begins to give place to anxiety.

"That boy was a bad nigger," says mine host, in a half-whisper; "but you must not let your property worry you, my friend."

"Bad nigger!" interrupts the invalid. Mine host pauses for a moment, while M'Fadden sets his eyes upon him with a piercing stare.

"Not been cutting up nigger tricks?" he ejaculates, enquiringly, about to spring from his couch with his usual nimbleness. Mine host places his left hand upon his shoulder, and assures him there is no cause of alarm.

"Tell me if any thing's wrong about my property. Now do,—be candid!" his eyes roll, anxiously.

"All right—except the preacher; he's run away," mine host answers, suggesting how much better it will be to take the matter cool, as he is sure to be captured.

"What! who—how? you don't say! My very choicest piece of property. Well—well! who will believe in religion,

after that? He came to my sick chamber, the black vagabond did, and prayed as piously as a white man. And it went right to my heart; and I felt that if I died it would a' been the means a' savin my soul from all sorts of things infernal," says the recovering M'Fadden. He, the black preacher, is only a nigger after all; and his owner will have him back, or he'll have his black hide—that he will! The sick man makes another effort to rise, but is calmed into resignation through mine host's further assurance that the property will be "all right" by the time he gets well.

"How cunning it was in the black vagrant! I shouldn't be a bit surprised if he cleared straight for Massachusetts—Massachusetts hates our State. Her abolitionists will ruin us yet, sure as the world. We men of the South must do something on a grand scale to protect our rights and our property. The merchants of the North will help us; they are all interested in slave labour. Cotton is king; and cotton can rule, if it will. Cotton can make friendship strong, and political power great.

"There's my cousin John, ye see; he lives north, but is married to a woman south. He got her with seventeen mules and twenty-three niggers. And there's brother Jake's daughter was married to a planter out south what owns lots a' niggers. And there's good old uncle Richard; he traded a long time with down south folks, made heaps a money tradin niggers in a sly way, and never heard a word said about slavery not being right, that he didn't get into a deuce of a fuss, and feel like fightin? Two of Simon Wattler's gals were married down south, and all the family connections became down-south in principle. And there's Judge Brooks out here, the very best

down-south Judge on the bench; he come from cousin Ephraim's neighbourhood, down east. It's just this way things is snarled up a'tween us and them ar' tellers down New England way. It keeps up the strength of our peculiar institution, though. And southern Editors! just look at them: why, Lord love yer soul! two thirds on' em are imported from down-north way; and they make the very best southern-principled men. I thought of that last night, when Mr. Jones with the horns looked as if he would go with him. But, I'll have that preachin vagrant, I'll have him!" says Mr. M'Fadden, emphatically, seeming much more at rest about his departing affairs. As the shadows of death fade from his sight into their proper distance, worldly figures and property justice resume their wonted possession of his thoughts.

Again, as if suddenly seized with pain, he contorts his face, and enquires in a half-whisper—"What if this wound should mortify? would death follow quickly? I'm dubious yet!"

Mine host approaches nearer his bed-side, takes his hand. M'Fadden, with much apparent meekness, would know what he thought of his case?

He is assured by the kind gentleman that he is entirely out of danger—worth a whole parish of dead men. At the same time, mine host insinuates that he will never do to fight duels until he learns to die fashionably.

M'Fadden smiles,—remembers how many men have been nearly killed and yet escaped the undertaker,—seems to have regained strength, and calls for a glass of whiskey and water. Not too strong! but, reminding mine host of the

excellent quality of his bitters, he suggests that a little may better his case.

"I didn't mean the wound," resuming his anxiety for the lost preacher: "I meant the case of the runaway?"

"Oh! oh! bless me! he will forget he is a runaway piece of property in his anxiousness to put forth his spiritual inclinations. That's what'll betray the scamp;—nigger will be nigger, you know! They can't play the lawyer, nohow," mine host replies, with an assurance of his ability to judge negro character. This is a new idea, coming like the dew-drops of heaven to relieve his anxiety. The consoling intelligence makes him feel more comfortable.

The whiskey-and-bitters—most unpoetic drink—is brought to his bed-side. He tremblingly carries it to his lips, sips and sips; then, with one gulp, empties the glass. At this moment the pedantic physician makes his appearance, scents the whiskey, gives a favourable opinion of its application as a remedy in certain cases. The prescription is not a bad one. Climate, and such a rusty constitution as Mr. M'Fadden is blest with, renders a little stimulant very necessary to keep up the one thing needful—courage! The patient complains bitterly to the man of pills and powders; tells a great many things about pains and fears. What a dreadful thing if the consequence had proved fatal! He further thinks that it was by the merest act of Providence, in such a desperate affray, he had not been killed outright. A great many bad visions have haunted him in his dreams, and he is very desirous of knowing what the man of salts and senna thinks about the true interpretation of such. About the time he was dreaming such dreams he

was extremely anxious to know how the spiritual character of slave-holders stood on the records of heaven, and whether the fact of slave-owning would cause the insertion of an item in the mortal warrant forming the exception to a peaceful conclusion with the Father's forgiveness. He felt as if he would surely die during the night past, and his mind became so abstracted about what he had done in his life,—what was to come, how negro property had been treated, how it should be treated,—that, although he had opinions now and then widely different, it had left a problem which would take him all his life-time to solve,—if he should live ever so long. And, too, there were these poor wretches accidentally shot down at his side; his feelings couldn't withstand the ghostly appearance of their corpses as he was carried past them, perhaps to be buried in the same forlorn grave, the very next day. All these things reflected their results through the morbidity of Mr. M'Fadden's mind; but his last observation, showing how slender is the cord between life and death, proved what was uppermost in his mind. "You'll allow I'm an honest man? I have great faith in your opinion, Doctor! And if I have been rather go-ahead with my niggers, my virtue in business matters can't be sprung," he mutters. The physician endeavours to calm his anxiety, by telling him he is a perfect model of goodness,—a just, honest, fearless, and enterprising planter; and that these attributes of our better nature constitute such a balance in the scale as will give any gentleman slaveholder very large claims to that spiritual proficiency necessary for the world to come.

Mr. M'Fadden acquiesces in the correctness of this

remark, but desires to inform the practitioner what a sad loss he has met with. He is sure the gentleman will scarcely believe his word when he tells him what it is. "I saw how ye felt downright affected when that nigger a' mine prayed with so much that seemed like honesty and christianity, last night," he says.

"Yes," interrupts the man of medicine, "he was a wonderful nigger that. I never heard such natural eloquence nor such pathos; he is a wonder among niggers, he is! Extraordinary fellow for one raised up on a plantation. Pity, almost, that such a clergyman should be a slave."

"You don't say so, Doctor, do you? Well! I've lost him just when I wanted him most."

"He is not dead?" enquires the physician, suddenly interrupting. He had seen Mr. M'Fadden's courage fail at the approach of death, and again recover quickly when the distance widened between that monitor and himself, and could not suppress the smile stealing over his countenance.

"Dead! no indeed. Worse—he has run away!" Mr. M'Fadden quickly retorted, clenching his right hand, and scowling. In another minute he turns back the sheets, and, with returned strength, makes a successful attempt to sit up in bed. "I don't know whether I'm better or worse; but I think it would be all right if I warn't worried so much about the loss of that preacher. I paid a tremendous sum for him. And the worst of it is, my cousin deacon Stoner, of a down-east church, holds a mortgage on my nigger stock, and he may feel streaked when he hears of the loss;" Mr. M'Fadden concludes, holding his side to the physician, who commences examining the wound, which the

enfeebled man says is very sore and must be dressed cautiously, so that he may be enabled to get out and see to his property.

To the great surprise of all, the wound turns out to be merely a slight cut, with no appearance of inflammation, and every prospect of being cured through a further application of a very small bit of dressing plaster.

The physician smiled, mine host smiled; it was impossible to suppress the risible faculties. The poor invalid is overpowered with disappointment. His imagination had betrayed him into one of those desperate, fearful, and indubitable brinks of death, upon which it seems the first law of nature reminds us what is necessary to die by. They laughed, and laughed, and laughed, till Mr. McFadden suddenly changed countenance, and said it was no laughing affair,—such things were not to be trifled with; men should be thinking of more important matters. And he looked at the wound, run his fingers over it gently, and rubbed it as if doubting the depth.

“A little more whiskey wouldn't hurt me, Doctor?” he enquires, complacently, looking round the room distrustfully at those who were enjoying the joke, more at his expense than he held to be in accordance with strict rules of etiquette.

“I'll admit, my worthy citizen, your case seemed to baffle my skill, last night,” the physician replies, jocosely. “Had I taken your political enthusiasm into consideration,—and your readiness to instruct an assemblage in the holy democracy of our south,—and your hopes of making strong draughts do strong political work, I might have saved my opiate, and administered to your case more in accordance with the skilfully administered prescriptions of our poli-

ticians. Notwithstanding, I am glad you are all right, and trust that whenever you get your enthusiasm fired with bad brandy, or the candidates' bad whiskey, you will not tax other people's feelings with your own dying affairs; nor send for a 'nigger' preacher to redeem your soul, who will run away when he thinks the job completed."

Mr. McFadden seemed not to comprehend the nature of his physician's language, and after a few minutes pause he must needs enquire about the weather? if a coroner's inquest has been held over the dead men? what was its decision? was there any decision at all? and have they been buried? Satisfied on all these points, he gets up, himself again, complaining only of a little muddled giddiness about the head, and a hip so sore that he scarcely could reconcile his mind to place confidence in it.

"Good by! good by!" says the physician, shaking him by the hand. "Measure the stimulant carefully; and take good care of dumplin depôt No. 1, and you'll be all right very soon. You're a good democrat, and you'll make as good a stump orator as ever took the field."

The man of medicine, laughing heartily within himself, descends the stairs and reaches the bar-room, where are concentrated sundry of the party we have before described. They make anxious enquiries about Mr. McFadden,—how he seemed to "take it?" did he evince want of pluck? had he courage enough to fight a duel? and could his vote be taken afore he died? These, and many other questions of a like nature, were put to the physician so fast, and with so many invitations to drink "somethin'," that he gave a sweeping answer by saying Mac had been more frightened than hurt; that the fear of death having passed from

before his eyes, his mind had now centered on the loss of his nigger preacher—a valuable piece of property that had cost him no less than fifteen hundred dollars. And the worst of it was, that the nigger had aggravatingly prayed for him when he thought he was going to sink out into the arms of father death.

So pressing were the invitations to drink, that our man of medicine advanced to the counter, like a true gentleman of the south, and with his glass filled with an aristocratic mixture, made one of his politest bows, toasted the health of all free citizens, adding his hope for the success of the favourite candidate.

“Drink it with three cheers, standin’!” shouted a formidably mustached figure, leaning against the counter with his left hand, while his right was grasping the jug from which he was attempting in vain to water his whiskey. To this the physie gentleman bows assent; and they are given to the very echo. Taking his departure for the city, as the sounds of cheering die away, he merged from the front door, as Mr. M’Fadden, unexpectedly as a ghost rising from the tomb, made his entrance from the old staircase in the back. The citizens—for of such is our assembly composed—are astonished and perplexed. “Such a set of scapegoats as you are!” grumbles out the debutant, as he stands before them like a disinterred spectre. With open arms they approach him, congratulate him on his recovery, and shower upon him many good wishes, and long and strong drinks.

A few drinks more, and our hero is quite satisfied with his welcome. His desire being intimated, mine host

conducts himself to the corn-shed, where he satisfies himself that his faithful property (the preacher excepted) is all snugly safe. Happy property in the hands of a prodigious democrat! Happy republicanism that makes freedom but a privilege! that makes a mockery of itself, and enslaves the noblest blood of noble freemen! They were happy, the victims of ignorance, contented with the freedom their country had given them, bowing beneath the enslaving yoke of justice-boasting democracy, and ready to be sold and shipped, with an invoice of freight, at the beckon of an owner.

Mr. M'Fadden questions the people concerning Harry's departure; but they are as ignorant of his whereabouts as himself. They only remember that he came to the shed at midnight, whispered some words of consolation, and of his plain fare gave them to eat;—nothing more.

“Poor recompense for my goodness!” says Mr. M'Fadden, muttering some indistinct words as he returns to the tavern, followed by a humorous negro, making grimaces in satisfaction of “mas'r's” disappointment. Now friends are gathered together, chuckling in great glee over the large reward offered for the lost parson, for the capture of which absconding article they have numerous horses, dogs, confidential negroes, and a large supply of whiskey, with which very necessary liquid they will themselves become dogs of one kind. The game to be played is purely a democratic one; hence the clansmen are ready to loosen their souls' love for the service. M'Fadden never before witnessed such satisfactory proofs of his popularity; his tenderest emotions are excited; he cannot express the fulness of his heart;

he bows, puts his hand to his heart, orders the balance of his invoice to be sent to his plantation, mounts his horse, and rides off at full gallop, followed by his friends, whose beasts bound with liveliest hopes of the successful issue of the chase.

CHAPTER XII.

A FRIEND IS WOMAN.

THE reader will again accompany us to the time when we find Annette and Nicholas in the hands of Graspum,—who will nurture them for their increasing value.

Merciless creditors have driven Marston from that home of so many happy and hospitable associations, to seek shelter in the obscure and humble chamber of a wretched building in the outskirts of the city. Fortune can afford him but a small cot, two or three broken chairs, an ordinary deal table, a large chest, which stands near the fire-place, and a dressing-stand, for furniture. Here, obscured from the society he had so long mingled with, he spends most of his time, seldom venturing in public lest he may encounter those indomitable gentlemen who would seem to love the following misfortune into its last stage of distress. His worst enemy, however, is that source of his misfortunes he cannot disclose; over it hangs the mystery he must not solve! It enshrines him with guilt before public opinion; by it his integrity lies dead; it is that which gives to mother rumour the weapons with which to wield her keenest slanders.

Having seized Marston's real estate, Graspum had no scruples about swearing to the equity of his claim; nor were any of the creditors willing to challenge an investiga-

tion; and thus, through fear of such a formidable abettor, Marston laboured under the strongest, and perhaps the most unjust imputations. But there was no limit to Graspum's mercenary proceedings; for beyond involving Marston through Lorenzo, he had secretly purchased many claims of the creditors, and secured his money by a dexterous movement, with which he reduced the innocent children to slavery.

Reports have spread among the professedly knowing that Marston can never have made away with all his property in so few years. And the manner being so invisible, the charge becomes stronger. Thus, labouring between the pain of misfortune and the want of means to resent suspicion, his cheerless chamber is all he can now call his home. But he has two good friends left—Franconia, and the old negro Bob. Franconia has procured a municipal badge for Daddy; and, through it (disguised) he seeks and obtains work at stowing cotton on the wharfs. His earnings are small, but his soul is large, and enshrined with attachment for his old master, with whom he will share them. Day by day the old slave seems to share the feelings of his master,—to exhibit a solicitous concern for his comfort. Earning his dollars and twenty-five cents a day, he will return when the week has ended, full of exultation, spread out his earnings with childlike simplicity, take thirty cents a day for himself, and slip the remainder into Marston's pocket. How happy he seems, as he watches the changes of Marston's countenance, and restrains the gushing forth of his feelings!

It was on one of those nights upon which Daddy had received his earnings, that Marston sat in his cheerless chamber, crouched over the faint blaze of a few pieces of

wood burning on the bricks of his narrow fire-place, contemplating the eventful scenes of the few years just passed. The more he contemplated the more it seemed like a dream; his very head wearied with the interminable maze of his difficulties. Further and further, as he contemplated, did it open to his thoughts the strange social and political mystery of that more strange institution for reducing mankind to the level of brutes. And yet, democracy, apparently honest, held such inviolable and just to its creed; which creed it would defend with a cordon of steel. The dejected gentleman sighs, rests his head on his left hand, and his elbow on the little table at his side. Without, the weather is cold and damp; an incessant rain had pattered upon the roof throughout the day, wild and murky clouds hang their dreary festoons along the heavens, and swift scudding fleeces, driven by fierce, murmuring winds, bespread the prospect with gloom that finds its way into the recesses of the heart.

“Who is worse than a slave?” sighs the rejected man, getting up and looking out of his window into the dreary recesses of the narrow lane. “If it be not a ruined planter I mistake the policy by which we govern our institution! As the slave is born a subject being, so is the planter a dependent being. We planters live in disappointment, in fear, in unhappy uncertainty; and yet we make no preparations for the result. Nay, we even content ourselves with pleasantly contemplating what may come through the eventful issue of political discord; and when it comes in earnest, we find ourselves the most hapless of unfortunates. For myself, bereft of all I had once,—even friends, I am but a forlorn object in the scale of weak mankind! No

man will trust me with his confidence,—scarcely one knows me but to harass me ; I can give them no more, and yet I am suspected of having more. It is so, and ever will be so. Such are the phases of man's downfall, that few follow them to the facts, while rumour rules supreme over misfortune. There may be a fountain of human pain concealed beneath it ; but few extend the hand to stay its quickening. Nay, when all is gone, man cries, more ! until body and soul are crushed beneath the " more " of relentless self.

" Few know the intricacies of our system ; perhaps 'twere well, lest our souls should not be safe within us. But, ah ! my conscience chides me here. And betwixt those feelings which once saw all things right, but now through necessity beholds their grossest wrongs, comes the pain of self-condemnation. It is a condemnation haunting me unto death. Had I been ignorant of Clotilda's history, the fiendish deed of those who wronged her in her childhood had not now hung like a loathsome pestilence around my very garments. That which the heart rebukes cannot be concealed ; but we must be obedient to the will that directs all things ;—and if it be that we remain blind in despotism until misfortune opens our eyes, let the cause of the calamity be charged to those it belongs to," he concludes ; and then, after a few minutes' silence, he lights his taper, and sets it upon the table. His care-worn countenance pales with melancholy ; his hair has whitened with tribulation ; his demeanour denotes a man of tender sensibility fast sinking into a physical wreck. A well-soiled book lies on the table, beside which he takes his seat ; he turns its pages over and over carelessly, as if it were an indifferent amusement to wile away the time. " They cannot enslave affection, nor can they confine it within

prison walls," he mutters. He has proof in the faithfulness of Daddy, his old slave. And as he contemplates, the words "she will be more than welcome to-night," escape his lips. Simultaneously a gentle tapping is heard at the door. Slowly it opens, and the figure of an old negro, bearing a basket on his arm, enters. He is followed by the slender and graceful form of Franconia, who approaches her uncle, hand extended, salutes him with a kiss, seats herself at his side, says he must not be sad. Then she silently gazes upon him for a few moments, as if touched by his troubles, while the negro, having spread the contents of the basket upon the chest, makes a humble bow, wishes mas'r and missus good night, and withdraws. "There, uncle," she says, laying her hand gently on his arm, "I didn't forget you, did I?" She couples the word with a smile—a smile so sweet, so expressive of her soul's goodness. "You are dear to me, uncle; yes, as dear as a father. How could I forget that you have been a father to me? I have brought these little things to make you comfortable," (she points to the edibles on the chest) and I wish I were not tied to a slave, uncle, for then I could do more. Twice since my marriage to M^cCarstrow, have I had to protect myself from his ruffianism."

"From his ruffianism!" interrupts Marston, quickly: "Can it be, my child, that even a ruffian would dare exhibit his villainess toward you?"

"Even toward me, uncle. With reluctance I married him, and my only regret is, that a slave's fate had not been mine ere the fruits of that day fell upon me. Women like me make a feeble defence in the world; and bad husbands are the shame of their sex," she returns, her eyes bright-

ening with animation, as she endeavours to calm the excitement her remarks have given rise to: "Don't, pray don't mind it, uncle," she concludes.

"Such news had been anticipated; but I was cautious not to"—

"Never mind," she interrupts, suddenly coiling her delicate arm round his neck, and impressing a kiss on his careworn cheek. "Let us forget these things; they are but the fruits of weak nature. It were better to bear up under trouble than yield to trouble's bardens: better far. Who knows but that it is all for the best?" She rises, and, with seeming cheerfulness, proceeds to spread the little table with the refreshing tokens of her friendship. Yielding to necessity, the table is spread, and they sit down, with an appearance of domestic quietness touchingly humble.

"There is some pleasure, after all, in having a quiet spot where we can sit down and forget our cares. Perhaps (all said and done), a man may call himself prince of his own garret, when he can forget all beyond it," says Marston, affected to tears by Franconia's womanly resignation.

"Yes," returns Franconia, joyously, "it's a consolation to know that we have people among us much worse off than we are. I confess, though, I feel uneasy about our old slaves. Slavery's wrong, uncle; and it's when one's reduced to such extremes as are presented in this uninviting garret that we realise it the more forcibly. It gives the poor wretches no chance of bettering their condition; and if one exhibits ever so much talent over the other, there is no chance left him to improve it. It is no recompense to the slave that his talent only increases the price of the article to be sold. Look what Harry would have been had he

enjoyed freedom. Uncle, we forget our best interests while pondering over the security of a bad system. Would it not be better to cultivate the slave's affections, rather than oppress their feelings?" Franconia has their cause at heart— forgets her own. She is far removed from the cold speculations of the south; she is free from mercenary motives; unstained by that principle of logic which recognises only the man merchandise. No will hath she to contrive ingenious apologies for the wrongs inflicted upon a fallen race. Her words spring from the purest sentiment of the soul; they contain a smarting rebuke of Marston's former misdoings: but he cannot resent it, nor can he turn the tide of his troubles against her noble generosity.

They had eaten their humble supper of meats and bread, and coffee, when Franconia hears a rap at the lower entrance, leading into the street. Bearing the taper in her hand, she descends the stairs quickly, and, opening the door, recognises the smiling face of Daddy Bob. 'Daddy greets her as if he were surcharged with the very best news for old mas'r and missus. He laughs in the exuberance of his simplicity, and, with an air of fondness that would better become a child, says, "Lor', young missus, how glad old Bob is to see ye! Seems like long time since old man 'see'd Miss Frankone look so spry. Got dat badge." The old man shows her his badge, exultingly. "Missus, nobody know whose nigger I'm's, and old Bob arns a right smart heap a' money to make mas'r comfortable." The old slave never for once thinks of his own infirmities; no, his attachment for master soars above every thing else; he thinks only in what way he can relieve his necessities. Honest, faithful, and affectionate, the associations of the past are uppermost in his mind; he

forgets his slavery in his love for master and the old plantation. Readily would he lay down his life, could he, by so doing, lighten the troubles he instinctively sees in the changes of master's position. The old plantation and its people have been sold; and he, being among the separated from earth's chosen, must save his infirm body lest some man sell him for the worth thereof. Bob's face is white with beard, and his coarse garments are much worn and ragged; but there is something pleasing in the familiarity with which Franconia accepts his brawny hand. How free from that cold advance, that measured welcome, and that religious indifference, with which the would-be friend of the slave, at the north, too often accepts the black man's hand! There is something in the fervency with which she shakes his wrinkled hand that speaks of the goodness of the heart: something that touches the old slave's childlike nature. He smiles bashfully, and says, "Glad t' see ye, missus; dat I is: 'spishilly ven ye takes care on old mas'r." After receiving her salutation he follows her to the chamber, across which he hastens to receive a welcome from old mas'r. Marston warmly receives his hand, and motions him to be seated on the chest near the fire-place. Bob takes his seat, keeping his eye on mas'r the while. "Neber mind, mas'r," he says, "Big Mas'r above be better dan Buckra. Da'h is somefin' what Buckra no sell from ye, dat's a good heart. If old mas'r on'y keeps up he spirit, de Lor' 'll carry un throu' 'e triblation," he continues; and, after watching his master a few minutes, returns to Franconia, and resumes his jargon.

Franconia is the same fair creature Bob watched over when she visited the plantation: her countenance wears

the same air of freshness and frankness; her words are of the same gentleness; she seems as solicitous of his comfort as before. And yet a shadow of sadness shrouds that vivacity which had made her the welcome guest of the old slaves. He cannot resist those expressions which are ever ready to lisp forth from the negro when his feelings are excited. "Lor, missus, how old Bob's heart feels! Hah, ah! yah, yah! Looks so good, and reminds old Bob how e' look down on dah Astley, yander. But, dah somefin in dat ar face what make old nigger like I know missus don't feel just right," he exclaims.

The kind woman reads his thoughts in the glowing simplicity of his wrinkled face. "It has been said that a dog was our last friend, Bob: I now think a slave should have been added. Don't you think so, uncle?" she enquires, looking at Marston, and, again taking the old slave by the hand, awaits the reply.

"We rarely appreciate their friendship until it be too late to reward it," he replies, with an attempt to smile.

"True, true! but the world is full of ingratitude,—very amiable ingratitude. Never mind, Daddy; you must now tell me all about your affairs, and, what has happened since the night you surprised me at our house; and you must tell me how you escaped M'Carstrow on the morning of the disturbance," she enjoins. And while Bob relates his story Franconia prepares his supper. Some cold ham, bread, and coffee, are soon spread out before him. He will remove them to the chest, near the fire-place. "Why, Missus Frankone," he says, "ye sees how I'se so old now dat nobody tink I'se werf' ownin; and so nobody axes old Bob whose nigger he is. An't prime nigger, now; but den a'

good fo' work some, and get cash, so t' help old mas'r yander (Bob points to old master). Likes t' make old master feel not so bad."

"Yes," rejoins Marston, "Bob's good' to me. He makes his sleeping apartments, when he comes, at the foot of my bed, and shares his earnings with me every Saturday night. He's like an old clock that can keep time as well as a new one, only wind it up with care."

"Dat I is!" says Daddy, with an exulting nod of the head, as he, to his own surprise, lets fall his cup. It was only the negro's forgetfulness in the moment of excitement. Giving a wistful look at Franconia, he commences picking up the pieces, and drawing his week's earnings from a side pocket of his jacket.

"Eat your supper, Daddy; never mind your money now," says Franconia, laughing heartily: at which Bob regains confidence and resumes his supper, keeping a watchful eye upon his old master the while. Every now and then he will pause, cant his ear, and shake his head, as if drinking in the tenour of the conversation between Franconia and her uncle. Having concluded, he pulls out his money and spreads it upon the chest. "Old Bob work hard fo' dat!" he says, with emphasis, spreading a five-dollar bill and two dollars and fifty cents in silver into divisions. "Dah!" he ejaculates, "dat old mas'r share, and dis is dis child's." The old man looks proudly upon the coin, and feels he is not so worthless, after all. "Now! who say old Bob aint werf nofin?" he concludes, getting up, putting his share into his pocket, and then, as if unobserved, slipping the balance into Marston's. This done, he goes to the window, affects to be looking out, and then resuming his seat upon

the chest, commences humming a familiar plantation tune, as if his pious feelings had been superseded by the recollection of past scenes.

"What, Daddy,--singing songs?" interrupts Franconia, looking at him enquiringly. He stops as suddenly as he commenced, exchanges an expressive look, and fain would question her sincerity.

"Didn't mean 'um, missus," he returns, after a moment's hesitation, "didn't mean 'um. Was thinkin 'bout somethin back'ards; down old plantation times."

"You had better forget them times, Bob."

"Buckra won't sell dis old nigger,—will he, Miss Frankone?" he enquires, resuming his wonted simplicity.

"Sell you, Bob? You're a funny old man. Don't think your old half-worn-out bones are going to save you. Money's the word: they'll sell anything that will produce it,—dried up of age are no exceptions. Keep out of Elder Pemberton Praiseworthy's way: whenever you hear him singing, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall come,' as he always does,—run! He lives on the sale of infirmity, and your old age would be a capital thing for the exercise of his genius. He will put you through a course of regeneration, take the wrinkles smooth out of your face, dye those old grey whiskers, and get a profit for his magic power of transposing the age of negro property," she replied, gravely, while Bob stares at her as if doubting his own security.

"Why, missus!" he interposes, his face glowing with astonishment; "Buckra don't be so smart dat he make old nigger young, be he?"

"Traders can do anything with niggers that have got

money in them, as they say. Our distinguished people are sensitive of the crime, but excuse themselves with apologies they cannot make cover the shame."

"Frank!" interrupts Marston, "spare the negro's feelings,—it may have a bad effect." He touches her on the arm, and knits his brows in caution.

"How strange, to think that bad influence could come of such an inoffensive old man! Truth, I know and feel, is powerfully painful when brought home to the doors of our best people,—it cuts deep when told in broad letters; but they make the matter worse by attempting to enshrine the status with their chivalry. We are a wondrous people, uncle, and the world is just finding it out, to our shame. We may find it out ourselves, by and by; perhaps pay the penalty with sorrow. We look upon negroes as if they were dropped down from some unaccountable origin,—intended to raise the world's cotton, rice, and sugar, but never to get above the menial sphere we have conditioned for them. Uncle, there is a mistake somewhere,—a mistake sadly at variance with our democratic professions. Democracy needs to reclaim its all-claiming principles of right and justice for the down-trodden. And yet, while the negro generously submits to serve us, we look upon him as an auspicious innovator, who never could have been born to enjoy manhood, and was subjected to bear a black face because God had ~~revelled~~ him for servitude. Did God found an aristocracy of colour, or make men to be governed by their distinctive qualifications of colour relationship?" says Franconia, her face resuming a flush of agitation. Touching Marston on the arm with the fore-finger of her right hand, and giving a glance at Bob, who listens atten-

tively to the theme of conversation, she continues: "Say no more of bad influence coming of slaves, when the corruptest examples are set by those who hold them as such,—who crush their hopes, blot out their mental faculties, and turn their bodies into licentious merchandise that they may profit by its degradation! Show me the humblest slave on your plantation, and, in comparison with the slave-dealer, I will prove him a nobleman of God's kind,—of God's image: his simple nature will be his clean passport into heaven. The Father of Mercy will receive him there; he will forgive the crimes enforced upon him by man; and that dark body on earth will be recompensed in a world of light,—it will shine with the brighter spirits of that realm of justice and love. Earth may bring the slave-trader bounties; but heaven will reject the foul offering." The good woman unfolds the tender emotions of her heart, as only woman can.

Bob listens, as if taking a deep interest in the force and earnestness of young missus's language. He is swayed by her pathos, and at length interposes his word.

"Nigger ain't so good as white man (he shakes his head, philosophically). White man sharp; puzzle nigger to find out *what* 'e don, know ven 'e mind t'." Thus saying, he takes a small hymn-book from his pocket, and, Franconia setting the light beside him, commences reading to himself by its dim glare.

"Well! now, uncle, it's getting late, and I've a good way to go, and the night's stormy; so I must prepare for home." Franconia gets up, and evinces signs of withdrawing. She walks across the little chamber three or four times, looks out of the winnow, strains her sight into the gloomy

prospect, and then, as if reluctant to leave her uncle, again takes a seat by his side. Gently laying her left hand upon his shoulder, she makes an effort at pleasantry, tells him to keep up his resolution—to be of good cheer.

“Remember, uncle,” she says, calmly, “they tell us it is no disgrace to be poor,—no shame to work to live; and yet poor people are treated as criminals. For my own part, I would rather be poor and happy than rich with a base husband; I have lived in New England, know how to appreciate its domestic happiness. It was there Puritanism founded true American liberty.—Puritanism yet lives, and may be driven to action; but we must resign ourselves to the will of an all-wise Providence.” Thus concluding, she makes another attempt to withdraw.

“You must not leave me yet!” says Marston, grasping her hand firmly in his. “Franke, I cannot part with you until I have disclosed what I have been summoning resolution to suppress. I know your attachment, Franconia; you have been more than dear to me. You have known my feelings,—what they have already had to undergo.” He pauses.

“Speak it, uncle, speak it! Keep nothing from me, nor make secrets in fear of my feelings. Speak out,—I may relieve you!” she interrupts, nervously: and again encircling her arm round his neck, waits his reply, in breathless suspense.

He falters for a moment, and then endeavours to regain his usual coolness. “To-morrow, Franconia,” he half mutters out, “to-morrow, you may find me not so well situated, (here tears are seen trickling down his cheeks) and

in a place where it will not become your delicate nature to visit me."

"Nay, uncle!" she stops him there; "I will visit you wherever you may be—in a castle or a prison."

The word prison has touched the tender chord upon which all his troubles are strung. He sobs audibly; but they are only sobs of regret, for which there is no recompense in this late hour. "And would you follow me to a prison, Franconia?" he enquires, throwing his arms about her neck, kissing her pure cheek with the fondness of a father.

"Yea, and share your sorrows within its cold walls. Do not yield to melancholy, uncle,—you have friends left: if not, heaven will prepare a place of rest for you; heaven shields the unfortunate at last," rejoins the good woman, the pearly tears brightening in mutual sympathy.

"To-morrow, my child, you will find me the unhappy tenant of those walls where man's discomfiture is complete."

"Nay, uncle, nay! you are only allowing your melancholy forebodings to get the better of you. Such men as Graspum—(men who have stripped families of their all)—might take away your property, and leave you as they have left my poor parents; but no one would be so heartless as to drive you to the extreme of imprisonment. It is a foolish result at best." Franconia's voice falters; she looks more and more intensely in her uncle's face, struggles to suppress her rising emotions. She knows his frankness, she feels the pain of his position; but, though the dreadful extreme seems scarcely possible, there is that in his face conveying strong evidence of the truth of his remark.

"Do not weep, Franconia; spare your tears for a more worthy object: such trials have been borne by better men than me. I am but the merchandise of my creditors. There is, however, one thing which haunts me to grief; could I have saved my children, the pain of my position had been slight indeed."

"Speak not of them, uncle," Franconia interrupts, "you cannot feel the bitterness of their lot more than myself. I have saved a mother, but have failed to execute my plan of saving them; and my heart throbs with pain when I think that now it is beyond my power. Let me not attempt to again excite in your bosom feelings which must ever be harassing, for the evil only can work its destruction. To clip the poisoning branches and not uproot the succouring trunk, is like casting pearls into the waste of time. My heart will ever be with the destinies of those children, my feelings bound in anison with theirs; our hopes are the same, and if fortune should smile on me in times to come I will keep my word—I will snatch them from the devouring element of slavery."

"Stop, my child!" speaks Marston, earnestly: "Remember you can do little against the strong arm of the law, and still stronger arm of public opinion. Lay aside your hopes of rescuing those children, Franconia, and remember that while I am in prison I am the property of my creditors, subject to their falsely conceived notions of my affairs," he continues. "I cannot now make amends to the law of nature," he adds, burying his face in his hand, weeping a child's tears.

Franconia looks solicitously upon her uncle, as he sobs. She would dry her tears to save his throbbing heart.

Her noble generosity and disinterestedness have carried her through many trials since her marriage, but it fails to nerve her longer. Her's is a single-hearted sincerity, dispensing its goodness for the benefit of the needy; she suppresses her own troubles that she may administer consolation to others. "The affection that refuses to follow misfortune to its lowest step is weak indeed. If you go to prison, Franconia will follow you there," she says, with touching pathos, her musical voice adding strength to the resolution. Blended with that soft angelic expression her eyes give forth, her calm dignity and inspiring nobleness show how firm is that principle of her nature never to abandon her old friend.

The old negro, who had seemed absorbed in his sympathetic reflections, gazes steadfastly at his old master, until his emotions spring forth in kindest solicitude. Resistance is beyond his power. "Neber'mind, old mas'r," (he speaks, in a devoted tone) "dar's better days 'comin, bof fo' old Bob and mas'r. Tink 'um sees de day when de old plantation jus so 't was wid mas'r and da' old folks." Concluding in a subdued voice, he approaches Franconia, and seats himself, book in hand, on the floor at her feet. Moved by his earnestness, she lays her hand playfully upon his head, saying: "Here is our truest friend, uncle!"

"My own heart lubs Miss Frankone more den eber," he whispers in return. How pure, now holy, is the simple recompense! It is nature's only offering, all the slave can give; and he gives it in the bounty of his soul.

Marston's grief having subsided, he attempts to soothe Franconia's feelings, by affecting an air of indifference. "What need I care, after all? my resolution should be above

it," he says, thrusting his right hand into his breast pocket, and drawing out a folded paper, which he throws upon the little table, and says, "There, Franconia, my child! that contains the climax of my unlamented misfortunes; read it: it will show you where my next abode will be—I may be at peace there; and there is consolation at being at peace, even in a cell." He passes the paper into her hand.

With an expression of surprise she opens it, and glances over its contents; then reads it word by word. "Do they expect to get something from nothing?" she says, sarcastically. "It is one of those soothsayers so valuable to men whose feelings are only with money—to men who forget they cannot carry money to the graves; and that no tribute is demanded on either road leading to the last abode of man."

"Stop there, my child! stop!" interrupts Marston. "I have given them all, 'tis true; but suspicion is my persecutor—suspicion, and trying to be a father to my own children!"

"It is, indeed, a misfortune to be a father under such circumstances, in such an atmosphere!" the good woman exclaims, clasping her hands and looking upward, as if imploring the forgiveness of Heaven. Tremblingly she held the paper in her hand, until it fell upon the floor, as she, overcome, swooned in her uncle's arms.

She swooned! yes, she swooned. That friend upon whom her affections had been concentrated was a prisoner. The paper was a bail writ, demanding the body of the accused. The officer serving had been kind enough to allow

Marston his parole of honour until the next morning. He granted this in accordance with Marston's request, that by the lenity he might see Daddy Bob and Franconia once more.

Lifting Franconia in his arms, her hair falling loosely down, Marston lays her gently on the cot, and commences bathing her temples. He has nothing but water to bathe them with,—nothing but poverty's liquid. The old negro, frightened at the sudden change that has come over his young missus, falls to rubbing and kissing her hands,—he has no other aid to lend. Marston has drawn his chair beside her, sits down upon it, unbuttons her stomacher, and continues bathing and chafing her temples. How gently heaves that bosom so full of fondness, how marble-like those features, how pallid but touchingly beautiful that face! Love, affection, and tenderness, there repose so calmly! All that once gave out so much hope, so much joy, now withers before the blighting sting of misfortune. She sighs, draws her left hand to her bosom, (swelling as gently as the snow-lake falls,) rests it upon the incision of her dress. "Poor child, how fondly she loves me!" says Marston, placing his right arm under her head, and raising it gently. The motion quickens her senses,—she speaks; he kisses her pallid cheek,—kisses and kisses it. "Is it you, uncle?" she whispers. She has opened her eyes, stares at Marston, then wildly along the ceiling. "Yes, I'm in uncle's arms; how good!" she continues, as if fatigued. Reclining back on the pillow she again rests her head upon his arm. "I am at the mansion,—how pleasant, let me rest, uncle; let me rest. Send aunt Rachel to me." She

raises her right hand and lays her arms about Marston's neck, as anxiously he leans over her. How dear are the associations of that old mansion ! how sweet the thought of home ! how uppermost in her wandering mind the remembrance of those happy days !

CHAPTER XXXI.

DEMOCRACY HAS A PRISON FOR FATHERS.

WHILE Franconia revives, let us beg the reader's indulgence for not recounting the details thereof. The night continues dark and stormy, but she must return to her own home,—she must soothe the excited feelings of a dissolute and disregarding husband, who, no doubt, is enjoying his night orgies, while she is administering consolation to the downcast. “Ah! uncle,” she says, about to take leave of him for the night, “how with spirit the force of hope fortifies us; and yet how seldom are our expectations realised through what we look forward to! You now see the value of virtue; but when seen through necessity, how vain the repentance. Nevertheless, let us profit by the lesson before us; let us hope the issue may yet be favourable!” Bob will see his young missus safe home—he will be her guide and protector. So, preparing his cap, he buttons his jacket, laughs and grins with joy, goes to the door, then to the fire-place, and to the door again, where, keeping his left hand on the latch, and his right holding the casement, he bows and scrapes, for “Missus comin.” Franconia arranges her dress as best she can, adjusts her bonnet, embraces Marston, imprints a fond kiss on his cheek, reluctantly relinquishes his hand, whispers a last word of consolation, and bids him good night,—a gentle good night—in sorrow.

She has gone, and the old slave is her guide, her human watch-dog. Slowly Marston paces the lonely chamber alone, giving vent to his pent-up emotions. What may to-morrow bring forth? runs through his wearied mind. It is but the sudden downfall of life, so inseparable from the planter who rests his hopes on the abundance of his human property. But the slave returns, and relieves him of his musings. He has seen his young missus safe to her door; he has received her kind word, and her good, good night! Entering the chamber with a smile, he sets about clearing away the little things, and, when done, draws his seat close to Marston, at the fire-place. As if quite at home beside his old master, he eyes Marston intently for some time,—seems studying his thoughts and fears. At length the old slave commences disclosing his feelings. His well-worn bones are not worth a large sum; nor are the merits of his worthy age saleable;—no! there is nothing left but his feelings, those genuine virtues so happily illustrated. Daddy Bob will stand by mas'r, as he expresses it, in power or in prison. Kindness has excited all that vanity in Bob so peculiar to the negro, and by which he prides himself in the prime value of his person. There he sits—Marston's faithful friend, contemplating his silence with a steady gaze, and then, giving his jet-black face a double degree of seriousness, shrugs his shoulders, significantly nods his head, and intimates that it will soon be time to retire, by commencing to unboot master.

"You seem in a hurry to get rid of me, Daddy! Want to get your own cranium into a pine-knot sleep, eh?" says Marston, with an encouraging smile, pulling the old slave's whiskers in a playful manner.

"No, Boss; 'tant dat," returns Bob, keeping on tugging

at Marston's boots until he has got them from his feet, and safely stowed away in a corner. A gentle hint that he is all ready to relieve Marston of his upper garments brings him to his feet, when Bob commences upon him in right good earnest, and soon has him stowed away between the sheets. "Bob neber likes to hurry old Boss, but den 'e kno' what's on old Mas'r's feelins, an 'e kno' dat sleep make 'um forget 'um!" rejoins Bob, in a half whisper that caught Marston's ear, as he patted and fussed about his pillow, in order to make him as comfortable as circumstances would admit. After this he extinguishes the light, and, accustomed to a slave's bed, lumbers himself down on the floor beside master's cot. Thus, watchfully, he spends the night.

When morning dawned, Bob was in the full enjoyment of what the negro so pertinently calls a long and strong sleep. He cannot resist its soothing powers, nor will master disturb him in its enjoyment. Before breakfast-time arrives, however, he arouses with a loud guffaw, looks round the room vacantly, as if he were doubting the presence of things about him. Rising to his knees, he rubs his eyes languidly, yawns, and stretches his arms, scratches his head, and suddenly gets a glimpse of old master, who is already dressed, and sits by the window, his attention intently set upon some object without. The old slave recognises the same chamber from which he guided Franconia on the night before, and, after saluting mas'r, sets about arranging the domestic affairs of the apartment, and preparing the breakfast table, the breakfast being cooked at Aunt Beckie's cabin, in the yard. Aunt Beckie had the distinguished satisfaction of knowing Marston in his better days, and now esteems it an honour to serve him, even in his poverty. Always happy to inform her friends

that she was brought up a first-rate pastry-cook, she now adds, with great satisfaction, that she pays her owner, the very Reverend Mr. Thomas Tippletony, the ever-pious rector of St. Michael's, no end of money for her time, and makes a good profit at her business beside. Notwithstanding she has a large family of bright children to maintain in a respectable way, she hopes for a continuance of their patronage, and will give the best terms her limited means admit. She knows how very necessary it is for a southern gentleman who would be anybody to keep up appearances, and, with little means, to make a great display: hence she is very easy in matters of payment. In Marston's case, she is extremely proud to render him service,—to “do for him” as far as she can, and wait a change for the better concerning any balance outstanding.

Bob fetches the breakfast of coffee, fritters, homony, and bacon.—a very good breakfast it is, considering the circumstances,—and spreads the little rustic board with an air of comfort and neatness complimentary to the old slave's taste. And, withal, the old man cannot forego the inherent vanity of his nature, for he is unconsciously, performing all the ceremonies of attendance he has seen Dandy and his satellites go through at the plantation mansion. He fusses and grins, and praises and laughs, as he sets the dishes down one by one, keeping a watchful eye on mas'r, as if to detect an approval in his countenance. “Reckon 'ow dis old nigger can fix old Boss up aristocratic breakfast like Dandy. Now, Boss—da'h he is!” he says, whisking round the table, setting the cups just so, and spreading himself with exultation. “Want to see mas'r smile—laugh some—like 'e used down on da'h old plantation!” he ejaculates, emphatically,

placing a chair at Marston's plate. This done, he accompanies his best bow with a scrape of his right foot, spreads his hands,—the gesture being the signal of readiness. Marston takes his chair, as Bob affects the compound dignity of the very best trained nigger, doing the distinguished in waiting.

"A little less ceremony, my old faithful! the small follies of etiquette ill become such a place as this. We must succumb to circumstances: come, sit down, Bob; draw your bench to the chest, and there eat your share, while I wait on myself," says Marston, touching Bob on the arm. The words were no sooner uttered, than Bob's countenance changed from the playful to the serious; he could see nothing but dignity in master, no matter in what sphere he might be placed. His simple nature recoils at the idea of dispensing with the attention due from slave to master. Master's fallen fortunes, and the cheerless character of the chamber, are nothing to Daddy—master must keep up his dignity.

You need'nt look so serious, Daddy; it only gives an extra shade to your face, already black enough for any immediate purpose!" says Marston, turning round and smiling at the old slave's discomfiture. To make amends, master takes a plate from the table, and gives Bob a share of his homony and bacon. This is a soothsayer with the old slave, who regains his wonted earnestness, takes the plate politely from his master's hand, retires with it to the chest, and keeps up a regular fire of chit-chat while dispensing its contents. In this humble apartment, master and slave (the former once opulent, and the latter still warm with attachment for his friend) are happily companioned. They finish their breakfast,—a long pause intervenes. "I would I were beyond the bounds of this *our south*," says Marston, breaking the silence,

as he draws his chair and seats himself by the window, where he can look out upon the dingy little houses in the lane.

The unhappy man feels the burden of a misspent life; he cannot recall the past, nor make amends for its errors. But, withal, it is some relief that he can disclose his feelings to the old man, his slave.

"Mas'r," interrupts the old slave, looking complacently in his face, "Bob 'll foller ye, and be de same old friend. I will walk behind Miss Frankoue." His simple nature seems warming into fervency.

"Ah! old man," returns Marston, "if there be a wish (you may go before me, though) I have on earth, it is that when I die our graves may be side by side, with an epitaph to denote master, friend, and faithful servant lie here." He takes the old man by the hand again, as the tears drop from his cheeks. "A prison is but a grave to the man of honourable feelings," he concludes. Thus disclosing his feelings, a rap at the door announces a messenger. It is nine o'clock, and immediately the sheriff, a gentlemanly-looking man, wearing the insignia of office on his hat, walks in, and politely intimates that, painful as may be the duty, he must request his company to the county gaol, that place so accommodatigly prepared for the reception of unfortunates.

"Sorry for your misfortunes, sir! but we'll try to make you as comfortable as we can in our place." The servator of the law seems to have some sympathy in him. "I have my duty to perform, you know, sir; nevertheless, I have my opinion about imprisoning honest men for debt: it's a poor satisfaction, sir. I'm only an officer, you see, sir, not a law-maker—never want to be, sir. I very much dislike to

execute these kind of writs," says the man of the law, as, with an expression of commiseration, he glances round the room, and then at Daddy, who has made preparations for a sudden dodge, should such an expedient be found necessary.

"Nay, sheriff, think nothing of it; it's but a thing of common life,—it may befall us all. I can be no exception to the rule, and may console myself with the knowledge of companionship," replies Marston, as coolly as if he were preparing for a journey of pleasure.

How true it is, that, concealed beneath the smallest things, there is a consolation which necessity may bring out: how Providence has suited it to our misfortunes!

"There are a few things here—a very few—I should like to take to my cell; perhaps I can send for them," he remarks, looking at the officer, enquiringly.

"My name is Martin—Captain Martin, they call me,"—returns that functionary, politely. "If you accept my word of honour, I pledge it they are taken care of, and sent to your apartments."

"You mean my new lodging-house, or my new grave, I suppose," interrupts Marston, jocosely, pointing out to Daddy the few articles of bedding, chairs, and a window-curtain he desires removed. Daddy has been pensively standing by the fire-place the while, contemplating the scene.

Marston soon announces his readiness to proceed; and, followed by the old slave, the officer leads the way down the ricketty old stairs to the street. "I's gwine t'see whar dey takes old mas'r, any how, reckon I is," says the old slave, giving his head a significant turn.

"Now, sir," interrupts the officer, as they arrive at the bottom of the stairs, "perhaps you have a delicacy about going through the street with a sheriff; many men have: therefore I shall confide in your honour, sir, and shall give you the privilege of proceeding to the gaol as best suits your feelings. I never allow myself to follow the will of creditors: if I did, my duties would be turned into a system of tyranny, to gratify their feelings only. Now, you may take a carriage, or walk: only meet me at the prison gate."

"Thanks, thanks!" returns Marston, grateful for the officer's kindness, "my crime is generosity; you need not fear me. My old faithful here will guide me along." The officer bows assent, and with a respectful wave of the hand they separate to pursue different routes.

Marston walks slowly along, Bob keeping pace close behind. He passes many of his old acquaintances, who, in better times, would have recognised him with a cordial embrace: at present they have scarcely a nod to spare. Marston, however, is firm in his resolution, looks not on one side nor the other, and reaches the prison-gate in good time. The officer has reached it in advance, and waits him there. They pause a few moments as Marston scans the frowning wall that encloses the gloomy-looking old prison. "I am ready to go in," says Marston; and just as they are about to enter the arched gate, the old slave touches him on the arm, and says, "Mas'r, dats no place fo' h Bob. Can't stand seein' on ye locked up wid sich folks as in dah?" Solicitously he looks in his master's face. The man of trouble grasps firmly the old slave's hand, holds it in silence for some minutes—(the officer, moved by the touching scene, turns his head away)—as tears course down his cheeks. He

has no words to speak the emotions of his heart ; he shakes the old man's hand affectionately, attempts to whisper a word in his ear, but, is too deeply affected.

“ Good by, mas'r : may God bless 'um ! Ther's a place fo' h old mas'r yet. I'll com t' see mas'r every night,” says the old man, his words flowing from the bounty of his heart. He turns away reluctantly, draws his hand from Marston's, heaves a sigh, and repairs to his labour. How precious was that labour of love, wherein the old slave toils that he may share the proceeds with his master !

As Marston and the sheriff disappear through the gate, and are about to ascend the large stone steps leading to the portal in which is situated the inner iron gate opening into the debtors' ward, the sheriff made a halt, and, placing his arm in a friendly manner through Marston's, enquires, “ Anything I can do for you ? If there is, just name it. Pardon my remark, sir, but you will, in all probability, take the benefit of the act ; and, as no person seems willing to sign your bail, I may do something to relieve your wants, in my humble way.” Marston shakes his head ; the kindness impedes an expression of his feelings. “ A word of advice from me, however, may not be without its effect, and I will give it you ; it is this :—Your earnestness to save those two children, and the singular manner in which those slave drudges of Graspum produced the documentary testimony showing their property, has created wondrous suspicion about your affairs. I will here say, Graspum's no friend of yours ; in fact, he's a friend to nobody but himself ; and even now, when questioned on the manner of possessing all your real estate, he gives out insinuations, which, instead of exonerating you, create a still worse im-

pression against you. His conversation on the matter leaves the inference with your creditors that you have still more property secreted. Hence, mark me! it behoves you to keep close lips. Don't let your right hand know what your left does," continues the officer, in a tone of friendliness. They ascend to the iron gate, look through the grating. The officer, giving a whistle, rings the bell by touching a spring in the right-hand wall. "My lot at last!" exclaims Marston. "How many poor unfortunates have passed this threshold—how many times the emotions of the heart have burst forth on this spot—how many have here found a gloomy rest from their importuners—how many have here wiled away precious time in a gloomy cell, provided for the punishment of poverty!" The disowned man, for such he is, struggles to retain his resolution; fain would he, knowing the price of that resolution, repress those sensations threatening to overwhelm him.

The brusque gaoler appears at the iron gate; stands his burly figure in the portal; nods recognition to the officer; swings back the iron frame, as a number of motley prisoners gather into a semicircle in the passage. "Go back, prisoners; don't stare so at every new comer," says the gaoler, clearing the way with his hands extended.

One or two of the locked-up recognise Marston. They lip strange remarks, drawn forth by his appearance in charge of an officer. "Big as well as little fish bring up here," ejaculates one.

"Where are his worshippers and his hospitable friends?" whispers another.

"There's not much hospitality for poverty," rejoins a third, mutteringly. "Southern hospitality is unsound,

shallow, and flimsy ; a little dazzling of observances to cover very bad facts. You are sure to find a people who maintain the grossest errors in their political system laying the greatest claims to 'benevolence and principle—things to which they never had a right. The phantom of hospitality draws the curtain over many a vice—it is a well-told nothingness ornamenting the beggared system of your slavery ; that's my honest opinion," says a third, in a gruff voice, which indicates that he has no very choice opinion of such generosity. "If they want a specimen of true hospitality, they must go to New England ; there the poor man's offering stocks the garden of liberty, happiness, and justice ; and from them spring the living good of all," he concludes ; and folding his arms with an air of independence, walks up the long passage running at right angles with the entrance portal, and disappears in a cell on the left.

"I knew him when he was great on the turf. He was very distinguished then." "He'll be extinguished here," insinuates another, as he protrudes his eager face over the shoulders of those who are again crowding round the office-door, Marston and the officer having entered following the gaoler.

The sheriff passes the committimus to the man of keys ; that functionary takes his seat at a small desk, while Marston stands by its side, watching the process of his prison reception, in silence. The gaoler reads the commitment, draws a book deliberately from off a side window, spreads it open on his desk, and commences humming an air. "Pootty smart sums, eh !" he says, looking up at the sheriff, as he holds a quill in his left hand, and feels with the fingers of his right for a knife, which, he observes, he always keeps in

his right vest pocket. "We have a poor debtor's calendar for registering these things. I do these things different from other gaolers, and it loses me nothin'. I goes on the true principle, that 'taut right to put criminals and debtors together; and if the state hasn't made provision for keeping them in different cells, I makes a difference on the books, and that's somethin'. Helps the feelins over the smarting point," says the benevolent keeper of all such troublesome property as won't pay their debts:—as if the monstrous concentration of his amiability, in keeping separate books for the criminal and poverty-stricken gentlemen of his establishment, must be duly appreciated. Marston, particularly, is requested to take the initiative, he being the most aristocratic fish the gaoler has caught in a long time. But the man has made his pen, and now he registers Marston's name among the state's forlorn gentlemen, commonly called poor debtors. They always confess themselves in dependent circumstances. Endorsing the commitment, he returns it to the sheriff, who will keep the original carefully filed away in his own well-stocked department. The sheriff will bid his prisoner good morning! having reminded the gaoler what good care it was desirable to take of his guest; and, extending his hand and shaking that of Marston warmly, takes his departure, whilst our gaoler leads Marston into an almost empty cell, where he hopes he will find things comfortable, and leaves him to contemplate over the fallen fruit of poverty. "Come to this, at last!" says Marston, entering the cavern-like place.

CHAPTER XXXII.

VENDERS OF HUMAN PROPERTY ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR
ITS MENTAL CAPRICES.

READER! be patient with us, for our task is complex and tedious. We have but one great object in view—that of showing a large number of persons in the south, now held as slaves, who are by the laws of the land, as well as the laws of nature, entitled to their freedom. These people, for whom, in the name of justice and every offspring of human right, we plead, were consigned to the bondage they now endure through the unrighteous act of one whose name (instead of being execrated by a nation jealous of its honour), a singular species of southern historian has attempted to enshrine with fame. Posterity, ignorant of his character, will find his name clothed with a paragon's armour, while respecting the writer who so cleverly with a pen obliterated his crimes. We have only feelings of pity for the historian who discards truth thus to pollute paper with his kindness; such debts due to friendship are badly paid at the shrine of falsehood.* No such debts do we owe; we shall perform our duty fearlessly, avoiding dramatic effects, or aught else that may tend to improperly excite the feelings of the benevolent. No one better knows the defects of our social system—no one feels more forcibly that much to be lamented fact of there being no human law extant not liable to be evaded

or weakened by the intrigues of designing men :—we know of no power reposed in man the administration of which is not susceptible of abuse, or being turned to means of oppression : how much more exposed, then, must all these functions be where slavery in its popular sway rides triumphant over the common law of the land. Divine laws are with impunity disregarded and abused by anointed teachers of divinity. Peculation, in sumptuous garb, and with modern appliances, finds itself modestly—perhaps unconsciously, gathering dross at the sacred altar. How saint-like in semblance, and how unconscious of wrong, are ye bishops (holy ones, scarce of earth, in holy lawn) in that land of freedom where the slave's chains fall ere his foot pads its soil ! how calmly resigned the freemen who yield to the necessity of making strong the altar with the sword of state ! How, in the fulness of an expansive soul, these little ones, in lawn so white, spurn the unsanctified spoiler—themselves neck-deep in the very collars of covetousness the while ! How to their christian spirit it seems ordained they should see a people's ekeings serve their rolling in wealth and luxury ! and, yet, let no man question their walking in the ways of a meek and lowly Saviour—that Redeemer of mankind whose seamless garb no man purchaseth with the rights of his fellow. Complacently innocent of themselves, they would have us join their flock and follow them,—their pious eyes seeing only heavenly objects to be gained, and their pure hearts beating in heavy throbs for the wicked turmoil of our common world. Pardon us, brother of the flesh, say they, in saintly whispers,—it is all for the Church and Christ. Boldly fortified with sanctimony, they hurl back the shafts of reform, and ask to live

on sumptuously, as the only sought recompense for their christian love. Pious infallibility! how blind, to see not the crime!

Reader! excuse the diversion, and accompany us while we retrace our steps to where we left the loquacious Mr. M'Fadden, recovered from the fear of death, which had been produced by whiskey in draughts too strong. In company with a numerous party, he is just returning from an unsuccessful search for his lost preacher. They have scoured the lawns, delved the morasses, penetrated thick jungles of breaks, driven the cypress swamps, and sent the hounds through places seemingly impossible for human being to seclude himself, and where only the veteran rattlesnake would seek to lay his viperous head. No preacher have they found. They utter vile imprecations on his head, pit him "a common nigger," declare he has just learned enough, in his own crooked way, to be dubious property—good, if a man can keep him at minister business.

Mine host of the Inn feels assured, if he be hiding among the swamp jungle, the snakes and alligators will certainly drive him out: an indisputable fact this, inasmuch as alligators and snakes hate niggers. M'Fadden affirms solemnly, that the day he bought that clergyman was one of the unlucky days of his life; and he positively regrets ever having been a politician, or troubling his head about the southern-rights question. The party gather round the front stoop, and are what is termed in southern parlance "tuckered out." They are equally well satisfied of having done their duty to the state and a good cause. Dogs, their tails drooping, sneak to their kennels, horses reek with foam, the human dogs will "liquor" long and strong.

"Tisn't such prime stock, after all!" says McFadden, entering the veranda, reeking with mud and perspiration: "after a third attempt we had as well give it up." He shakes his head, and then strikes his whip on the floor. "I'll stand shy about buying a preacher, another time," he continues; like a man, much against his will, forced to give up a prize.

The crackers and wire-grass men (rude sons of the sand hills), take the matter more philosophically,—probably under the impression that to keep quiet will be to "bring the nigger out" where he may be caught and the reward secured. Two hundred dollars is a sum for which they would not scruple to sacrifice life; but they have three gods—whiskey, ignorance, and idleness, any one of which can easily gain a mastery over their faculties.

Mr. McFadden requests that his friends will all come into the bar-room—all jolly fellows; which, when done, he orders mine host to supply as much "good strong stuff" as will warm up their spirits. He, however, will first take a glass himself, that he may drink all their very good healths. This compliment paid, he finds himself pacing up and down, and across the room, now and then casting suspicious of glances at the notice of reward, as if questioning the policy of offering so large an amount. But sundown is close upon them, and as the bar-room begins to fill up again, each new-comer anxiously enquires the result of the last search,—which only serves to increase the disappointed gentleman's excitement. The affair has been unnecessarily expensive, for, in addition to the loss of his preacher, the price of whom is no very inconsiderable sum, he finds a vexatious bill running up against him at the bar. The friendship of those who have

sympathised with him, and have joined him in the exhilarating sport of man-hunting, must be repaid with swimming drinks. Somewhat celebrated for economy, his friends are surprised to find him, on this occasion, rather inclined to extend the latitude of his liberality. His keen eye, however, soon detects, to his sudden surprise, that the hunters are not alone enjoying his liberality, but that every new comer, finding the drinks provided at M'Fadden's expense, has no objection to join in drinking his health; to which he would have no sort of an objection, but for the cost. Like all men suffering from the effect of sudden loss, he begins to consider the means of economising by which he may affect the loss of the preacher. "I say, Squire!" he ejaculates, suddenly stopping short in one of his walks, and beckoning mine host aside, "That won't do, it won't! It's a coming too tough, I tell you!" he says, shaking his head, and touching mine host significantly on the arm. "A fellow what's lost his property in this shape don't feel like drinkin everybody on whiskey what costs as much as your "bright eye." You see, every feller what's comin in's "takin" at my expense, and claimin friendship on the strength on't. It don't pay, Squire! just stop it, won't ye?"

Mine host immediately directs the bar-keeper, with a sign and a whisper:—"No more drinks at M'Fadden's score, 'cept to two or three a' the most harristocratic." He must not announce the discontinuance openly; it will insult the feelings of the friendly people, many of whom anticipate a feast of drinks commensurate with their services and Mr. Lawrence M'Fadden's distinguished position in political life. Were they, the magnanimous people, informed of this

sudden shutting off of their supplies, the man who had just enjoyed their flattering encomiums would suddenly find himself plentifully showered with epithets a tyrant slave-dealer could scarcely endure.

Calling mine host into a little room opening from the bar, he takes him by the arm,—intimates his desire to have a consultation on the state of his affairs, and the probable whereabouts of his divine:—"You see, this is all the thanks I get for my kindness (he spreads his hands and shrugs his shoulders.) A northern man may do what he pleases for southern rights, and it's just the same; he never gets any thanks for it. "These sort a' fellers isn't to be sneered at when a body wants to carry a political end," he adds, touching mine host modestly on the shoulder, and giving him a quizzing look. "but ye can't make 'um behave mannerly towards respectable people, such as you and me is. But 'twould'at do to give 'um education, for they'd just spile society—they would' Ain't my ideas logical, now, squire?" Mr. M-Fadden's mind seems soaring away among the generalities of state.

"Well," returns mine host, prefacing the importance of his opinion with an imprecation, "I'm fixed a'tween two fires; so I can't say what would be square policy in affairs of state. One has feelins different on these things: I depends a deal on what our big folks say in the way of setting examples. And, too, what can you expect when this sort a reef-scut forms the means of raising their political positions; but, they are customers of mine,—have made my success in tavern-keeping!" he concludes, in an earnest whisper.

"Now, squire?" M-Fadden places his hand in mine host's

arm, and looks at him, seriously: "What 'bout that ar' nigger preacher gittin off so? No way t' find it out, eh! squire?" M'Fadden enquires, with great seriousness.

"Can't tell how on earth the critter did the thing; looked like peaceable property when he went to be locked up, did!"

"I think somebody's responsible for him, squire?" interrupts M'Fadden, watching the changes of the other's countenance: "seems how I heard ye say ye'd take the risk——"

"No,—no,—no!" rejoins the other, quickly; "that never will do. I never receipt for nigger property, never hold myself responsible to the customers, and never run any risks about their niggers. You forget, my friend, that whatever shadow of a claim you had on me by law was invalidated by your own act."

"My own act?" interrupts the disappointed man. "How by my own act? explain yourself!" suddenly allowing his feelings to become excited.

"Sending for him to come to your bedside and pray for you. It was when you thought Mr. Jones, the gentleman with the horns, stood over you with a warrant in his hand," mine host whispers in his ear, shrugging his shoulders, and giving his face a quizzical expression. "You appreciated the mental of the property then; but now you view it as a decided defect."

The disappointed gentleman remains silent for a few moments. He is deeply impressed with the anomaly of his case, but has not the slightest objection to fasten the responsibility on somebody, never for a moment supposing the law would interpose against the exercise of his very best inclinations. He hopes God will bless him, says it is always his luck; yet he cannot relinquish the idea of somebody being

responsible. He will know more about the preaching rascal's departure. Turning to mine host of the inn: "But, you must have a clue to him, somewhere?" he says, enquiringly.

"There's my woman; can see if she knows anything about the nigger!" returns mine host, complacently. Ellen Juvarne is brought into the presence of the injured man, who interrogates her with great care; but all her disclosures only tend to throw a greater degree of mystery over the whole affair. At this, Mr. M'Fadden declares that the policy he has always maintained with reference to education is proved true with the preacher's running away. Nigger property should never be perverted by learning; though, if you could separate the nigger from the preaching part of the property, it might do some good, for preaching was at times a good article to distribute among certain slaves "what had keen instincts." At times, nevertheless, it would make them run away. Ellen knew Harry as a good slave, a good man, a good Christian, sound in his probity, not at all inclined to be roughish,—as most niggers are—a little given to drink, but never bad-tempered. Her honest opinion is that such a pattern of worthy nature and moral firmness would not disgrace itself by running away, unless induced by white "Buckra." She thinks she heard a lumbering and shuffling somewhere about the pen, shortly after midnight. It might have been wolves, however. To all this Mr. M'Fadden listens with marked attention. Now and then he interposes a word, to gratify some new idea swelling his brain. There is nothing satisfactory yet: he turns the matter over and over in his mind, looks Ellen steadfastly in the face, and watches the movement of every muscle. "Ah!" he sighs, "nothing new developing." He dismissed the

wench, and turns to mine host of the inn. "Now, squire! (one minute mine host is squire, and the next Mr. Jones) tell ye what 'tis; thar's roguery goin on somewhere among them ar' fellers—them sharpers in the city, I means! (he shakes his head knowingly, and buttons his light sack-coat round him). That's a good gal, isn't she?" he enquires, drawing his chair somewhat closer, his hard face assuming great seriousness.

Mine host gives an affirmative nod, and says, "Nothin shorter! Can take her word on a turn of life or death. Tip top gal, that! Paid a price for her what u'd make ye wink, I reckon."

"That's just what I wanted to know," he interrupts, suddenly grasping the hand of his friend. "Ye see how I'se a little of a philosopher, a tall politician, and a major in the brigade down our district,—I didn't get my law akernin for nothin; and now I jist discovers how somebody—I mean some white somebody—has had a hand in helpin that ar' nig' preacher to run off. Cus'd critters! never know nothin till some white nigger fills their heads with roguery."

"Say, my worthy M'Fadden," interrupts the publican, rising suddenly from his seat, as if some new discovery had just broke forth in his mind, "war'nt that boy sold under a warrant?"

"Warranted—warranted—warranted sound in every particular? That he was. Just think of this, squire; you're a knowin one. It takes you! I never thought on't afore, and have had all my nervousness for nothin. Warranted sound in every particular, means——"

"A moment!" mine host interposes, suddenly: "there's a keen point of law there; but it might be twisted to some

account, if a body only had the right sort of a lawyer to twist it."

The perplexed man rejoins by hoping he may not be interrupted just at this moment. He is just getting the point of it straight in his mind. "You see," he says, "the thing begun to dissolve itself in my philosophy, and by that I discovered the point the whole thing stands on. Its entirely metaphysical, though," he says, with a significant shake of the head. He laughs at his discovery; his father, long since, told him he was exceedingly clever. Quite a match for the publican in all matters requiring a comprehensive mind, he declares there are few lawyers his equal at penetrating into points. "He warranted him in every particular," he mutters, as mine host, watching his seriousness, endeavours to suppress a smile. M'Fadden makes a most learned motion of the fore finger of the right hand, which he presses firmly into the palm of his left, while contracting his brows. He will soon essay forth the point of logic he wishes to enforce. The property being a certain man endowed with preaching propensities, soundness means the qualities of the man, mental as well as physical; and running away being an unsound quality, the auctioneer is responsible for all such contingencies. "I have him there,—I have!" he holds up his hands exultingly, as he exclaims the words; his face brightens with animation. Thrusting his hands into his trousers pockets he paces the room for several minutes, at a rapid pace, as if his mind had been relieved of some deep study. "I will go directly into the city, and there see what I can do with the chap I bought that feller of. I think when I put the law points to him, he'll shell out."

Making some preliminary arrangements with Jones of the tavern, he orders a horse to the door immediately, and in a few minutes more is hastening on his way to the city.

Arriving about noon-day, he makes his way through its busy thoroughfares, and is soon in the presence of the auctioneer. There, in wondrous dignity, sits the seller of bodies and souls, his cushioned arm-chair presenting an air of opulence. How coolly that pomp of his profession sits on the hard mask of his iron features, beneath which lurks a contempt of shame! He is an important item in the political hemisphere of the state, has an honourable position in society (for he is high above the minion traders), joined the episcopal church not many months ago, and cautions Mr. M'Fadden against the immorality of using profane language, which that aggrieved individual allows to escape his lips ere he enters the door.

The office of our man of fame and fortune is about thirty feet by twenty wide, and sixteen high. Its walls are brilliantly papered, and painted with landscape designs; and from the centre of the ceiling hangs a large chandelier, with ground-glass globes, on which eagles, of liberty are inscribed. Fine black-walnut desks, in chaste carving, stand along its sides, at which genteelly-dressed clerks are exhibiting great attention to business. An oil-cloth, with large flowers painted on its surface, spreads the floor, while an air of neatness reigns throughout the establishment singularly at variance with the outer mart, where Mr. Forshou sells his men, women, and little children. But its walls are hung with badly-executed engravings, in frames of gilt. Of the distinguished vender's taste a correct estimation may be

drawn when we inform the reader that many of these engravings represented nude females and celebrated race-horses.

"Excuse me, sir! I didn't mean it," Mr. M'Fadden says, in reply to the gentleman's caution, approaching him as he sits in his extensive chair, a few feet from the street door, luxuriantly enjoying a choice regalia. "It's the little point of a very nasty habit that hangs upon me yet. I does let out the swear once in a while, ye see; but it's only when I gets a crook in my mind what won't come straight." Thus M'Fadden introduces himself, surprised to find the few very consistent oaths he has made use of not compatible with the man-seller's pious business habits. He will be cautious the next time; he will not permit such foul breath to escape and wound the gentleman's very tender feelings.

Mr. Lawrence M'Fadden addresses him as squire, and with studious words informs him of the nigger preacher property he sold him having actually run away! "Ye warranted him, ye know, squire!" he says, discovering the object of his visit, then drawing a chair, and seating himself in close proximity.

"Can't help that—quality we never warrant!" coolly returns the other, turning politely in his arm-chair, which works in a socket, and directing a clerk at one of the desks to add six months' interest to the item of *three wenches* sold at ten o'clock.

"Don't talk that ar way, squire! I trades a deal in your line, and a heap a' times, with you. Now we'll talk over the legal points."

"Make them short, if you please!"

"Well! ye warranted the nigger in every particular.

There's the advertisement; and there's no getting over that! Ye must do the clean thing—no possomin—squire, or there'll be a long lawsuit what takes the tin. Honour's the word in our tradé." He watches the changes that are fast coming over the vender's countenance, folds his arms, places his right foot over his left knee, and awaits a reply. Interrupting the vender just as he is about to give his opinion, he draws from his pocket a copy of the paper containing the advertisement, and places it in his hand: "If ye'll be good enough to squint at it, ye'll see the hang a' my ideas," he says.

"My friend," returns the vender, curtly, having glanced over the paper, "save me and yourself any further annoyance. I could have told you how far the property was warranted, before I read the paper; and I remember making some very particular remarks when selling that item in the invoice. A nigger's intelligence is often a mere item of consideration in the amount he brings under the hammer; but we never warrant the exercise or extension of it. •Po'h, man! we might just as well attempt to warrant a nigger's stealing, lying, cunning, and all such 'cheating master' propensities. Some of them are considered qualities of much value—especially by poor planters. Warrant nigger property not to run away, eh! Oh! nothing could be worse in our business."

"A minute, squire!" interrupts the appealing Mr. M'Fadden, just as the other is about to add a suspending clause to his remarks. "If warrantin nigger proper sound in all partiklers is'nt warrantin it not to run away, I'm no deacon! When a nigger's got run-away in him he ain't sound'property; no way ye can fix it. Ye may turn all the

law and philosophy yer mind to over in yer head, but it won't cum common sense to me, that ye warrant a nigger's body part, and let the head part go unwarranted. When ye sells a critter like that, ye sells all his dévilry ; and when ye warrants one ye warrants t'other ; that's the square rule a' my law and philosophy !"

The vender puffs his weed very coolly the while ; and then, calling a negro servant, orders a chair upon which to comfortably place his feet. "Are you through, my friend ?" he enquires, laconically ; and being answered in the affirmative, proceeds—"I fear your philosophy is common philosophy—not the philosophy upon which nigger law is founded. You don't comprehend, my valued friend, that when we insert that negro property will be warranted, we don't include the thinking part ; and, of course, running away belongs to that !" he would inform all those curious on such matters. Having given this opinion for the benefit of M'Fadden, and the rest of mankind interested in slavery, he rises from his seat, elongates himself into a consequential position, and stands biting his lips, and dangling his watch chain with the fingers of his left hand.

"Take ye up, there," the other suddenly interrupts, as if he has drawn the point from his antagonist, and is prepared to sustain the principle, having brought to his aid new ideas from the deepest recesses of his logical mind. Grasping the vender firmly by the arm, he looks him in the face, and reminds him that the *runaway* part of niggers belongs to the heels, and not to the head.

The vender exhibits some discomfiture, and, at the same time, a decided unwillingness to become a disciple of such philosophy. Nor is he pleased with the familiarity of his

importuning customer, whose arm he rejects with a repulsive air.

There has evidently become a very nice and serious question, of which Mr. M'Fadden is inclined to take a common-sense view. His opponent, however, will not deviate from the strictest usages of business. Business mentioned the mental qualities of the property, but warranted only the physical,—hence the curious perplexity.

While the point stands thus nicely poised between their logic, Romescos rushes into the office, and, as if to surprise M'Fadden, extends his hand, smiling and looking in his face gratefully, as if the very soul of friendship incited him. "Mighty glad to see ye, old Buck!" he ejaculates, "feared ye war goin to kick out."

The appalled man stands for a few seconds as unmoved as a statue; and then, turning with a half-subdued smile, takes the hand of the other, coldly.

"Friends again! ain't we, old boy?" breaks forth from Romescos, who continues shaking his hand, at the same time turning his head and giving a significant wink to a clerk at one of the desks. "Politics makes bad friends now and then, but I always thought well of you, Mack! Now, neighbour, I'll make a bargain with you; we'll live as good folks ought to after this," Romescos continues, laconically. His advance is so strange that the other is at a loss to comprehend its purport. He casts doubting glances at his wily antagonist, seems considering how to appreciate the quality of such an unexpected expression of friendship, and is half inclined to demand an earnest of its sincerity. At the same time, and as the matter now stands, he would fain give his considerate friend wide space, and remain within a proper

range of etiquette until his eyes behold the substantial. He draws aside from Romescos, who says tremblingly : " Losing that preacher, neighbour, was a hard case—warn't it? You wouldn't a' caught this individual buyin' preachers—know too much about 'em, I reckon! It's no use frettin, though; the two hundred dollars 'll bring him. This child wouldn't want a profitabler day's work for his hound dogs." Romescos winks at the vender, and makes grimaces over M'Fadden's shoulder, as that gentleman turns and grumbles out,—“He warranted him in every partikler; and running away is one of a nigger's partiklers?”

“My pertinacious friend!” exclaims the vender, turning suddenly towards his dissatisfied customer, seeing you are not disposed to comprehend the necessities of my business, nor to respect my position, I will have nothing further to say to you upon the subject—not another word, now!” The dignified gentleman expresses himself in peremptory tones. It is only the obtuseness of his innate character becoming unnecessarily excited.

Romescos interposes a word or two, by way of keeping up the zest; for so he calls it. Things are getting crooked, according to his notion of the dispute, but fightin' won't bring back the lost. “'Spose ye leaves the settlin on't to me? There's nothing like friendship in trade; and seeing how I am up in such matters, p'raps I can smooth it down.”

“There's not much friendship about a loss of this kind; and he was warranted sound in every particular!” returns the invincible man, shaking his head, and affecting great seriousness of countenance.

“Stop that harpin, I say!” the vender demands, drawing

himself into a pugnacious attitude; "your insinuations against my honour aggravate me more and more."

"Well! just as you say about it," is the cool rejoinder. "But you'll have to settle the case afore lawyer Sprouts, you will!" Stupidly inclined to dog his opinions, the sensitive gentleman, claiming to be much better versed in the mode of selling human things, becomes fearfully enraged. M'Fadden contends purely upon contingencies which may arise in the mental and physical complications of property in man; and this the gentleman man seller cannot bear the reiteration of.

Romescos thinks it is at best but a perplexin snarl, requiring gentlemen to keep very cool. To him they are both honourable men, who should not quarrel over the very small item of one preacher. "This warrantin' niggers' heads never amounts to anything,—it's just like warrantin' their heels; and when one gets bad, isn't t'other sure to be movin? Them's my sentiments, gratis!" Stepping a few feet behind M'Fadden, Romescos rubs his hands in great anxiety, makes curious signs to the clerks at the desk, and charges his mouth with a fresh cut of tobacco.

"Nobody bespoke your opinion," says the disconsolate M'Fadden, turning quickly, in consequence of a sign he detected one of the clerks making, and catching Romescos bestowing a grimace of no very complimentary character, "Your presence and your opinion are, in my estimation, things that may easily be dispensed with."

"I say!" interrupts Romescos, his right hand in a threatening attitude, "not quite so fast (he drawls his words) a gentleman don't stand an insult a' that sort. Just draw them ar' words back, like a yard of tape, or

this individual 'll do a small amount of bruising on that ar' profile, (he draws his hand backward and forward across M'Fadden's face). 'Twon't do to go to church on Sundays with a broken phiz?" His face reddens with anger, as he works his head into a daring attitude, grates his teeth, again draws his fist across M'Fadden's face; and at length rubs his nasal organ.

"I understand you too well!" replies M'Fadden, with a curt twist of his head. "A man of your cloth can't insult a gentleman like me; you're lawless!" He moves towards the door, stepping sideways, watching Romescos over his left shoulder.

"I say! (Romescos takes his man by the arm) Come back here, and make a gentleman's apology!" He lets go M'Fadden's arm and seizes him by the collar violently, his face in a blaze of excitement.

"Nigger killer!" ejaculates M'Fadden, "let go there!" He gives his angry antagonist a determined look, as he, for a moment, looses his hold. He pauses, as if contemplating his next move.

The very amiable and gentlemanly man-vender thinks it time he interposed for the purpose of reconciling matters. "Gentlemen! gentlemen! respect me, if you do not respect yourselves. My office is no place for such disgraceful broils as these; you must go elsewhere." The modest gentleman, whose very distinguished family connexions have done much to promote his interests, would have it particularly understood that his office is an important place, used only for the very distinguished business of selling men, women, and little children. But Romescos is not so easily satisfied. He pushes the amiable gentleman aside, calls Mr. Lawrence

M'Fadden a tyrant what kills niggers by the detestably mean process of starving them to death. "A pretty feller he is to talk about nigger killin! And just think what our state has comè to when such fellers as him can make votes for the next election!" says Romescos, addressing himself to the vender. "The Irish influence is fast destroyin' the political morality of the country."

Turning to Mr. M'Fadden, who seems preparing for a display of his combativeness, he adds, "Ye see, Mack, ye will lie, and lie crooked too! and ye will steal, and steal dishonourably; and I can lick a dozen on ye quicker nor chain lightnin? I can send the hol batch on ye—rubbish as it is—to take supper t'other side of sundown." To be equal with his adversary, Romescos is evidently preparing himself for the reception of something more than words. Twice or thrice he is seen to pass his right hand into the left breast pocket of his sack, where commonly his shining steel is secreted. In another moment he turns suddenly towards the vender, pushes him aside with his left hand, and brings his right in close proximity with Mr. M'Fadden's left listener. That individual exhibits signs of renewed courage, to which he adds the significant warning: "Not quite so close; if you please!"

"As close as I sees fit!" returns the other, with a sardonic grin. "Why don't you resent it?—a gentleman would!"

Following the word, Mr. M'Fadden makes a pass at his antagonist, which, he says, is only with the intention of keeping him at a respectful distance. Scarcely has his arm passed when Romescos cries out, "There! he has struck me! He has struck me again!" and deals M'Fadden a blow with his clenched fist that fells him lumbering to the

floor. Simultaneously Romescos falls upon his prostrate victim, and a desperate struggle ensues.

The vender, whose sacred premises are thus disgraced, runs out to call the police, while the clerks make an ineffectual attempt to separate the combatants. Not a policeman is to be found. At night they may be seen swarming the city, guarding the fears of a white populace ever sensitive of black rebellion.

Like an infuriated tiger, Romescos, nimble as a catamount, is fast destroying every vestige of outline in his antagonist's face, drenching it with blood, and adding ghastliness by the strangulation he is endeavouring to effect.

"Try—try—trying to—kill—me—eh? You—you mad brute!" gutters out the struggling man, his eyes starting from the sockets like balls of fire, while gore and saliva foam from his mouth and nostrils as if his struggles are in death.

"Kill ye—kill ye!" Romescos rejoins, the shaggy red hair falling in tufts about his face, now burning with desperation: "it would be killin' only a wretch whose death society calls for."

At this, the struggling man, like one borne to energy by the last throes of despair, gives a desperate spring, succeeds in turning his antagonist, grasps him by the throat with his left hand, and from his pocket fires a pistol with his right. The report alarms; the shrill whistle calls to the rescue; but the ball has only taken effect in the flesh of Romescos's right arm. Quick to the moment, his arm dripping with gore from the wound, he draws his glittering dirk, and plunges it, with unerring aim, into the breast of

his antagonist. The wounded man starts convulsively, as the other coolly draws back the weapon, the blood gushing forth in a livid stream. "Is not *that* in self-defence?" exclaims the bloody votary, turning his haggard and enraged face to receive the approval of the bystanders. The dying man, writhing under the grasp of his murderer, utters a piercing shriek. "Murdered! I'm dying! Oh, heaven! is this my last—last—last? Forgive me, Lord, —forgive me!" he gurgles; and making another convulsive effort, wrings his body from under the perpetrator of the foul deed. How tenacious of life is the dying man! He grasps the leg of a desk, raises himself to his feet, and, as if goaded with the thoughts of hell, in his last struggles staggers to the door,—discharges a second shot, vaults, as it were, into the street, and falls prostrate upon the pavement, surrounded by a crowd of eager lookers-on. He is dead! The career of Mr. M'Fadden is ended; his spirit is summoned for trial before a just God.

The murderer (perhaps we abuse the word, and should apply the more southern term of *renconterist*), sits in a chair, calling for water, as a few among the crowd prepare to carry the dead body into Graspum's 'slave-pen, a few squares below.

Southern sensibility may call these scenes by whatever name it will; we have no desire to change the appropriateness, nor to lessen the moral tenor of southern society. It nurtures a frail democracy, and from its bastard offspring we have a tyrant dying by the hand of a tyrant, and the spoils of tyranny serving the good growth of the Christian church. Money constructs opinions, pious as well as

political, and even changes the feelings of good men, who invoke heaven's aid against the bondage of the souls of men.

Romezcos will not flee to escape the terrible award of earthly justice. Nay, that, in our atmosphere of probity, would be dishonourable; nor would it aid the purpose he seeks to gain.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A COMMON INCIDENT SHORTLY TOLD.

THE dead body of Mr. Lawrence M'Fadden, whose heart was strong with love of southern democracy, lies upon two pine-boards, ghastly and unshrouded, in a wretched slave-pen. Romescos, surrounded by admiring friends, has found his way to the gaol, where, as is the custom, he has delivered himself up to its keeper. He has spent a good night in that ancient establishment, and on the following morning finds his friends vastly increased. They have viewed him as rather desperate now and then; but, knowing he is brave withal, have "come to the rescue" on the present occasion. These frequent visits he receives with wonderful coolness and deference, their meats and drinks (so amply furnished to make his stay comfortable) being a great God-send to the gaoler, who, while they last, will spread a princely table.

Brien Moon, Esq.—better known as the good-natured coroner—has placed a negro watchman over the body of the deceased, on which he proposes to hold one of those curious ceremonies called inquests. Brien Moon, Esq. is particularly fond of the ludicrous, is ever ready to appreciate a good joke, and well known for his happy mode of disposing of dead dogs and cats, which, with anonymous letters

are in great numbers entrusted to his care by certain waggish gentlemen, who desire he will "hold an inquest over the deceased, and not forget the fees." It is said—the aristocracy, however, look upon the charge with contempt—that Brien Moon, Esq. makes a small per centage by selling those canine remains to the governor of the workhouse, which very humane gentleman pays from his own pocket the means of transferring them into gibletpies for the inmates. It may be all scandal about Mr. Moon making so large an amount from his office; but it is nevertheless true that sad disclosures have of late been made concerning the internal affairs of the workhouse.

The hour of twelve has arrived; and since eight in the morning Mr. Moon's time has been consumed in preliminaries necessary to the organisation of a coroner's jury. The reader we know will excuse our not entering into the minutiae of the organisation. Eleven jurors have answered the summons, but a twelfth seems difficult to procure. John, the good Coroner's negro servant, has provided a sufficiency of brandy and cigars, which, since the hour of eleven, have been discussed without stint. The only objection our worthy disposer of the dead has to this is, that some of his jurors, becoming very mellow, may turn the inquest into a farce, with himself playing the low-comedy part. The dead body, which lies covered with a sheet, is fast becoming enveloped in smoke, while no one seems to have a passing thought for it. Colonel Tom Edon,—who, they say, is not colonel of any regiment, but has merely received the title from the known fact of his being a hog-driver, which honourable profession is distinguished by its colonels proceeding to market mounted, while the captains

walk,—merely wonders how much bad whiskey the dead 'un consumed while he lived.

"This won't do!" exclaims Brien Moon, Esq., and proceeds to the door in the hope of catching something to make his mournful number complete. He happens upon Mr. Jonas Academy, an honest cracker, from Christ's parish, who visits the city on a little business. Jonas is a person of great originality, is enclosed in loosely-setting homespun, has a woe-begone countenance, and wears a large-brimmed felt hat. He is just the person to make the number complete, and is led in, unconscious of the object for which he finds himself a captive. Mr. Brien Moon now becomes wondrous grave, mounts a barrel at the head of the corpse, orders the negro to uncover the body, and hopes gentlemen will take seats on the benches he has provided for them, while he proceeds to administer the oath. Three or four yet retain their cigars: he hopes gentlemen will suspend their smoking during the inquest. Suddenly it is found that seven out of the twelve can neither read nor write; and Mr. Jonas Academy makes known the sad fact that he does not comprehend the nature of an oath, never having taken such an article in his life. Five of the gentlemen, who can read and write, are from New England; while Mr. Jonas Academy declares poor folks in Christ's parish are not fools, troubled with reading and writing knowledge. He has been told they have a thing called a college at Columbia; but only haristocrats get any good of it. In answer to a question from Mr. Moon, he is happy to state that their parish is not pestered with a schoolmaster. "Yes, they killed the one we had more nor two years ago, thank God! Han't bin trubld with one

a' the critters since," he adds, with unmoved nerves. The Coroner suggests that in a matter of expediency like the present it may be well to explain the nature of an oath; and, seeing that a man may not read and write, and yet comprehend its sacredness, perhaps it would be as well to forego the letter of the law. "Six used to do for this sort of a jury, but now law must have twelve," says Mr. Moon. Numerous voices assent to this, and Mr. Moon commences what he calls "an elucidation of the nature of an oath." The jurors receive this with great satisfaction, take the oath according to his directions, and after listening to the statement of two competent witnesses, who know but very little about the affair, are ready to render a verdict,—“that M'Fadden, the deceased, came to his death by a stab in the left breast, inflicted by a sharp instrument in the hand or hands of Anthony Romescos, during an affray commonly called a *rencontre*, regarding which there are many extenuating circumstances.” To this verdict Mr. Moon forthwith bows assent, directs the removal of the body, and invites the gentlemen jurors to join him in another drink, which he does in compliment to their distinguished services. The dead body will be removed to the receiving vault, and Mr. Moon dismisses his jurors with many bows and thanks; and nothing more.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE CHILDREN ARE IMPROVING.

THREE years have rolled round, and wrought great changes in the aspect of affairs. M'Fadden was buried on his plantation, Romescos was bailed by Graspum, and took his trial at the sessions for manslaughter. It was scarcely worth while to trouble a respectable jury with the paltry case—and then, they were so frequent! We need scarcely tell the reader that he was honourably acquitted, and borne from the court amid great rejoicing. His crime was only that of murder in self-defence; and, as two tyrants had met, the successful had the advantage of public opinion, which in the slave world soars high above law. Romescos being again on the world, making his cleverness known, we must beg the reader's indulgence, and request him to accompany us while we return to the children.

Annette and Nicholas are, and have been since the sale, the property of Graspum. They develope in size and beauty—two qualities very essential in the man-market of our democratic world, the South. Those beautiful features, intelligence, and reserve, are much admired as merchandise; for southern souls are not lifted above this grade of estimating coloured worth. Annette's cherub face, soft blue eyes, clear complexion, and light auburn hair, add to the sweetness of a countenance that education and care might make

brilliant; and yet, though reared on Marston's plantation, with unrestricted indulgence, her childish heart seems an outpouring of native goodness. She speaks of her mother with the affection of one of maturer years; she grieves for her return, wonders why she is left alone, remembers how kind that mother spoke to her when she said good by, at the cell door. How sweet is the remembrance of a mother! how it lingers, sparkling as a dewdrop, in a child's memory. Annette feels the affliction, but is too young to divine the cause thereof. She recalls the many happy plantation scenes; they are bright to her yet! She prattles about Daddy Bob, Harry, Aunt Rachel, and old Sue, now and then adding a solicitous question about Marston. But she does not realise that he is her father; no, it was not her lot to bestow a daughter's affection upon him, and she is yet too young to comprehend the poison of slave power. Her child-like simplicity affords a touching contrast to that melancholy injustice by which a fair creature with hopes and virtues after God's moulding, pure and holy, is made mere merchandise for the slave-market.

Annette has learned to look upon Nicholas as a brother; but, like herself, he is kept from those of his own colour by some, to him, unintelligible agency. Strange reflections flit through her youthful imagination, as she embraces him with a sister's fondness. How oft she lays her little head upon his shoulder, encircles his neck with her fair arm, and braids his raven hair with her tiny fingers! She little thinks how fatal are those charms she bears blooming into womanhood.

But, if they alike increase in beauty as they increase in age, their dispositions are as unlike as two opposites can be

moulded. Nicholas has inherited that petulant will, unbending determination, and lurking love of avenging wrong, so peculiar to the Indian race. To restlessness he adds distrust of those around him; and when displeased, is not easily reconciled. He is, however, tractable, and early evinced an aptitude for mechanical pursuits that would have done credit to maturer years. Both have been at service, and during the period have created no small degree of admiration—Annette for her promising personal appearance, Nicholas for his precocious display of talent. Both have earned their living; and now Nicholas is arrived at an age when his genius attracts purchasers.

Conspicuous among those who have been keeping an eye on the little fellow, is Mr. Jonathan Grabguy, a master-builder, largely engaged in rearing dwellings. His father was a builder, and his mother used to help the workmen to make Venetian blinds. Fortune showered her smiles upon their energies, and brought them negro property in great abundance. Of this property they made much; the father of the present Mr. Grabguy (who became a distinguished mayor of the city) viewing it peculiarly profitable to *use up* his niggers in five years. To this end he forced them to incessant toil, belabouring them with a weapon of raw hide, to which he gave the singular cognomen of "hell-fire." When extra punishment was—according to his policy—necessary to bring out the "digs," he would lock them up in his cage (a sort of grated sentry-box, large enough to retain the body in an upright position), and when the duration of this punishment was satisfactory to his feelings, he would administer a counter quantity of *stings* with his "hell-fire" wattle. Indeed, the elder Mr. Grabguy, who

afterwards became "His Worship the Mayor," was a wonderful disciplinarian, which very valuable traits of character his son retains in all their purity. His acts deserve more specific notice than we are at present able to give them, inasmuch as by them the safety of a state is frequently endangered, as we shall show in the climax.

Our present Mr. Grabguy is a small man, somewhat slender of person, about five feet seven inches high, who usually dresses in the habiliments of a working man, and is remarkable for his quickness. His features are dark and undefinable, marked with that thoughtfulness which applies only to the getting of wordly goods. His face is narrow and careworn, with piercing brown eyes, high cheek bones, projecting nose and chin, low forehead, and greyish hair, which he parts in the centre. These form the strongest index to his stubborn character; nevertheless he hopes, ere long, to reach the same distinguished position held by his venerable father, who, peace to his ashes! is dead.

"Now, good neighbour Graspum," says our Mr. Grabguy, as he stands in Graspum's warehouse examining a few prime fellows, "I've got a small amount to invest in stock, but I wants somethin' choice—say two or three prime uns, handy at tools. I wants somethin' what 'll make mechanics. Then I wants to buy," he continues, deliberately, "a few smart young uns, what have heads with somethin' in 'em, that ye can bring up to larn things. White mechanics, you see, are so independent now-a-days, that you can't keep 'um under as you can niggers.

"I've bin thinkin' 'bout tryin' an experiment with nigger 'prentices; and, if it goes, we can dispense with white mechanics entirely. My word for it, they're only a great

nuisance at best. When you put 'um to work with niggers they don't feel right, and they have notions that our society don't respect 'um because they must mix with the black rascals in following their trades; and this works its way into their feelings so, that the best on 'um from the north soon give themselves up to the worst dissipation. Ah! our white mechanics are poor wretches; there isn't twenty in the city you can depend on to keep sober two days."

"Well, sir," interrupts Graspum, with an air of great importance, as, with serious countenance, he stands watching every change in Mr. Grabguy's face, at intervals taking a cursory survey of his merchandise, "can suit you to most anything in the line. You understand my mode of trade, perfectly?" He touches Mr. Grabguy on the arm, significantly, and waits the reply, which that gentleman makes with a bow. "Well, if you do," he continues, "you know the means and markets I have at my command. Can sell you young uns of any age, prime uns of various qualities—from field hands down to watch-makers, clergymen!" He always keeps a good supply on hand, and has the very best means of supply. So Mr. Grabguy makes a purchase of three prime men, whom he intends to transform into first-rate mechanics. He declares he will not be troubled hereafter with those very miserable white workmen he is constrained to import from the north. They are foolish enough to think they are just as good as any body, and can be gentlemen in their profession. They, poor fools! mistake the south in their love of happy New England and its society, as they call it.

Having completed his bargain, he hesitates, as if there is something more he would like to have, "Graspum!" he says, "What for trade? can we strike for that imp a' yours at

Mrs. Tuttlewill's?" Without waiting for Graspum's reply, he adds—"That chap 's goin to make a tall bit of property one of these days!"

"Ought to," rejoins Graspum, stoically; "he's got right good stock in him." The man of business gives his head a knowing shake, and takes a fresh quid of tobacco. "Give that 'sprout' a chance in the world, and he'll show his hand!" he adds.

"That's what I wants," intimates our tradesman. He has had his eye on the fellow, and knows he's got a head what'll make the very best kind of a workman. But it will be necessary to take the stubborn out without injuring the "larning" part. Mr. Grabguy, with great unconcern, merely suggests these trifling matters for the better regulating of Mr. Graspum's price.

"Can do that easy enough, if you only study the difference between a nigger's hide and head. Can put welts on pretty strong, if you understand the difference a'tween the too," intimates our man of business, as he places his thumbs in his vest, and commences humming a tune. Then he stops suddenly, and working his face into a very learned contortion, continues—"Ye see, Grabguy, a man has to study the human natur of a nigger just the same as he would a mule or a machine. In truth, Grabguy, niggers are more like mules nor anything else, 'cause the brute 'll do everything but what ye wants him to do, afore he's subdued. You must break them when they are young. About ten or a dozen welts, sir, well laid on when ye first begin, and every time he don't toe the mark, will, in the course of 'a year, make him as

submissive as a spaniel—it will ! The virtue of submission is in the lash, it supple like seeds.”

“About the stock, Graspum : I don’t quite agree with you about that,—I never believed in blood, ye know. As far as this imp goes, I have my doubts about the blood doin on him much good ; seein’ how it kind a’ comes across my mind that there’s some Ingin in him. Now, if my philosophy serves me right, Ingin blood makes slave property want to run away (the speaker spreads himself with great nonchalance),—the very worst fault.”

“Poh ! poh !—isn’t a bit a’ that about him. That imp ’s from Marston’s estate, can’t scare up nothin so promisin’ in the way of likely colour,” Graspum interposes, with great assurance of manner. “You didn’t see the gal—did you ?” he concludes.

“I reckon I’ve taken a squint at both on ’em ! Pretty fine and likely. From the same bankrupt concern, I s’pose ?” Mr. Grabguy looks quite serious, and waits for a reply.

“Yes—nothing less,” Graspum replies, measuredly. “But won’t it make your eye water, neighbour Grabguy, one of these days ! Bring a tall price among some of our young bucks, eh !” He gives neighbour Grabguy a significant touch on the arm, and that gentleman turns his head and smiles. How quaintly modest !

“By the by, talking of Marston, what has become of him ? His affairs seem to have died out in the general levity which the number of such cases occasion. But I tell you what it is, Graspum, (he whispers, accompanying the word with an insinuating look), report implicates you in that affair.”

"Me?—Me?—Me, Sir? God bless you! why, you really startle me. My honour is above the world's scandal. Ah! if you only knew what I've done for that man, Marston;—that cussed nephew of his came within a feather of effecting my ruin. And there he lies, stubborn as a door-plate, sweating out his obstinacy in gaol. Lord bless your soul, I'm not to blame, you know!—I have done a world of things for him; but he won't be advised."

"His creditors think he has more money, and money being the upshot of all his troubles, interposes the point of difficulty in the present instance. I tell them he has no more money, but—I know not why—they doubt the fact the more, and refuse to release him, on the ground of my purchasing their claims at some ulterior period, as I did those two *fi fas* when the right of freedom was being contested in the children. But, you see, Grabguy, I'm a man of standing; and no money would tempt me to have anything to do with another such case. It was by a mere quirk of law, and the friendship of so many eminent lawyers, that I secured that fifteen hundred dollars from M'Carstrow for the gal what disappeared so mysteriously."

"Graspum!" interrupts Mr. Grabguy, suddenly, accompanying his remark with a laugh, "you're a good bit of a lawyer when it comes to the cross-grained. You tell it all on one side, as lawyers do. I know the risk you run in buying the *fi fas* on which those children were attached!" Mr. Grabguy smiles, doubtingly, and shakes his head.

"There are liabilities in everything," Graspum drawls out, measuredly "Pardon me, my friend, you never should found opinion on suspicion. More than a dozen times have I solicited Marston to file his schedule, and take the benefit

of the act. However, with all my advice and kindness to him, he will not move a finger towards his own release. Like all our high-minded Southerners, he is ready to maintain a sort of compound between dignity and distress, with which he will gratify his feelings. It's all pride, sir—pride!—you may depend upon it. (Graspum lays his hands together, and effects wondrous charity). I pity such men from the very bottom of my heart, because it always makes me feel bad when I think what they have been. Creditors, sir, are very unrelenting; and seldom think that an honourable man would suffer the miseries of a prison rather than undergo the pain of being arraigned before an open court, for the exposition of his poverty. Sensitiveness often founds the charge of wrong. The thing is much misunderstood; I know it, sir! Yes, sir! My own feelings make me the best judge," continues Graspum, with a most serious countenance. He feels he is a man of wonderful parts, much abused by public opinion, and, though always trying to promote public good, never credited for his many kind acts.

Turning his head aside to relieve himself of a smile, Mr. Grabguy admits that he is quite an abused man; and, setting aside small matters, thinks it well to be guided by the good motto:—'*retire from business with plenty of money.*' It may not subdue tongues, but it will soften whispsers. Money, Mr. Grabguy intimates, upon the strength of his venerable father's experience, is a curious medium of overcoming the ditchwork of society. In fact, he assures Graspum, that with plenty of shiners you may be just such a man as you please; everybody will forget that you ever bought or sold a nigger, and ten chances to

one if you do not find yourself sloped off into Congress, before you have had time to study the process of getting there. But, enough of this, Graspum;—let us turn to trade matters. What's the lowest shot ye'll take for that mellow mixture of Ingin and aristocracy. Send up and bring him down: let us hear the lowest dodge you'll let him slide at."

Mr. Grabguy evinces an off-handedness in trade that is quite equal to Graspum's keen tact. But Graspum has the faculty of preserving a disinterested appearance singularly at variance with his object.

A messenger is despatched, receipt in hand, for the boy Nicholas. Mrs. Tuttlewell, a brusque body of some sixty years, and with thirteen in a family, having had three husbands (all gentlemen of the highest standing, and connected with first families), keeps a stylish boarding-house, exclusively for the aristocracy, common people not being competent to her style of living; and as nobody could ever say one word against the Tuttlewell family, the present head of the Tuttlewell house has become very fashionably distinguished. The messenger's arrival is made known to Mrs. Tuttlewell, who must duly consider the nature of the immediate demand. She had reason to expect the services of the children would have been at her command for some years to come. However, she must make the very best of it; they are Graspum's property, and he can do what he pleases with them. She suggests, with great politeness, that the messenger take a seat in the lower veranda. Her house is located in a most fashionable street, and none knew better than good lady Tuttlewell herself the value of living up to a fashionable nicety; for, where slavery exists, it is a trade to live.

Both children have been "waiting on table," and, on hearing the summons, repair to their cabin in the yard. Mrs. Tuttlewell, reconsidering her former decision, thinks the messenger better follow them, seeing that he is a nigger with kindly looks. "Uncle!" says Annette, looking up at the old Negro, as he joins them: "Don't you want me too?"

"No," returns the man, coolly, shaking his head.

"I think they must be going to take us back to the old plantation, where Daddy Bob used to sing so. Then I shall see mother—how I do want to see her!" she exclaims, her little heart bounding with ecstacy. Three years or more have passed since she prattled on her mother's knee.

The negro recognises the child's simplicity. "I on'e wants dat child; but da'h an't gwine t' lef ye out on da plantation, nohow!" he says.

"Not going to take us home!" she says, with a sigh. Nicholas moodily submits himself to be prepared, as Annette, more vivacious, keeps interposing with various enquiries. She would like to know where they are going to take little Nicholas; and when they will let her go and see Daddy Bob and mother? "Now, you can take me; I know you can!" she says, looking up at the messenger, and taking his hand pertly.

"No—can't, little 'un! Mus' lef 'um fo'h nuder time. You isn't broder and sister—is ye?"

"No!" quickly replies the little girl, swinging his hand playfully; "but I want to go where he goes; and I want to see mother when he does."

"Well, den, little 'un (tho negro sees he cannot overcome the child's simplicity by any other means), dis child will come fo'h 'um to-morrow—dat I will!"

"And you'll bring Nicholas back—won't you?" she enquires, grasping the messenger more firmly by the hand.

"Sartin! no mistake 'bout dat, little 'uman." At this she takes Nicholas by the hand, and retires to their little room in the cabin. Here, like one of older years, she washes him, and dresses him, and fusses over him.

He is merely a child for sale; so she combs his little locks, puts on his new osnaburgs, arranges his nice white collar about his neck, and makes him look so prim. And then she ties a piece of black ribbon about his neck, giving him the bright appearance of a school-boy on examination-day. The little girl's feelings seem as much elated as would be a mother's at the prospect of her child gaining a medal of distinction.

"Now, Nicholas!" she whispers, with touching simplicity, as she views him from head to foot with a smile of exultation on her face, "your mother never dressed you so neat. But I like you more and more, Nicholas, because both our mothers are gone; and maybe we shall never see 'um again." And she kisses him fondly,—tells him not to stay long,—to tell her all he has seen and heard about mother, when he returns.

"I don't know, 'Nette, but 'pears to me we ain't like other children—they don't have to be sold so often; and I don't seem to have any father."

"Neither do I; but Mrs. Tuttlewell says I mustn't mind that, because there's thousands just like us. And then she says we ain't the same kind a' white folks that she is; she says we are white, but niggers for all that. I don't know how it is! I'm not like black folks, because I'm just as white as any white folks," she rejoins, placing her little

arms round his neck and smoothing his hair with her left hand.

"I'll grow up, one a' these days."

"And so will I," she speaks, boldly.

"And I'm goin' to know where my mother's gone, and why I ain't as good as other folks' white children," he rejoins sullenly, shaking his head, and muttering away to himself. It is evident that the many singular stages through which he is passing serve only to increase the stubbornness of his nature. The only black distinguishable in his features are his eyes and hair; and, as he looks in the glass to confirm what he has said, Annette takes him by the hand, tells him he must not mind, now; that if he is good he shall see Franconia,—and mother, too, one of these days. He must not be pettish, she remarks, holding him by the hand like a sister whose heart glows with hope for a brother's welfare. She gives him in charge of the messenger, saying, "Good by!" as she imprints a kiss on his cheek, its olive hues changing into deep crimson.

The negro answers her adieu with "Good by, little dear! God bless 'um!" Nay, the native goodness of his heart will not permit him to leave her thus. He turns round, takes her in his arms, kisses and kisses her fair cheek. It is the truth of an honest soul, expressed with tears glistening in his eyes. Again taking Nicholas by the hand, he hastens through the passage of Mrs. Tuttlewell's house, where, on emerging into the street, he is accosted by that very fashionable lady, who desires to know if he has got the boy "all right!" Being answered in the affirmative, she gives a very dignified—"Glad of it," and

desires her compliments to Mr. Graspum, who she hopes will extend the same special regards to his family, and retires to the recesses of her richly-furnished parlor.

The gentleman dealer and his customer are waiting in the man shambles, while the negro messenger with his boy article of trade plod their way along through the busy streets. The negro looks on his charge with a smile of congratulation. "Mas'r'll laugh all over 'e clothes when he sees ye—dat he will!" he says, with an air of exultation.

"I'd like to know where I'm goin' to afore I go much further," returns the boy, curtly, as he walks along, every few minutes asking unanswerable questions of the negro.

"Lor, child!" returns the negro, with a significant smile, "take ye down to old massa what own 'um! Fo'h true!"

"Own me!" mutters the child, surlily. "How can they own me without owning my mother?—and I've no father."

"White man great 'losipher; he know so much, dat nigger don't know nofin," is the singularly significant answer.

"But God didn't make me for a nigger,—did he?"

"Don' know how dat is, child. 'Pears like old mas'r tink da' ain't no God; and what he sees in yander good book lef 'um do just as 'e mind to wid nigger. Sometimes Buckra sell nigger by de pound, just like 'e sell pig; and den 'e say 't was wid de Lord's will."

"If mas'r Lord be what Buckra say he be, dis child don' want t' be 'quainted wid 'um," he coolly dilates, as if he

foresees the mournful result of the child's bright endowments.

The negro tries to quiet the child's apprehensions by telling him he thinks " Buckra, what's waiting down in da'h office, gwine t' buy 'um of old mas'r. Know dat Buckra! he sharp feller. Get e' eye on ye, and make up 'e mind what 'e gwine to give fo'h 'um, quicker!" says the negro.

Graspum has invited his customer, Mr. Grabguy, into his more comfortable counting-room, where, as Nicholas is led in, they may be found discussing the rights of the south, as guaranteed by the federal constitution. The south claim rights independent of the north; and those rights are to secede from the wrongs of the north whenever she takes into her head the very simple notion of carrying them out. Graspum, a man of great experience, whose keen sense of justice is made keener by his sense of practical injustice,—thinks the democracy of the south was never fully understood, and that the most sure way of developing its great principles is by hanging every northerner, whose abolition mania is fast absorbing the liberties of the country at large.

"That's the feller!" says Mr. Grabguy, as the negro leads Nicholas into his presence, and orders him to keep his hands down while the gentleman looks at him. "Stubborn sticks out some, though, I reckon," Mr. Grabguy adds, rather enthusiastically. "Absolam! Isaac! Joe! eh? what's your name?"

"He's a trump!" interposes Graspum, rubbing his hands together, and giving his head a significant shake.

"Nicholas, they call me, master," answers the boy, pettishly.

Mr. Grabguy takes him by the arms, feels his muscle

with great care and caution, tries the elasticity of his body by lifting him from the floor by his two ears. This is too much, which the child announces with loud screams. "Stuff! out and out," says Mr. Grabguy, patting him on the back, in a kind sort of way. At the same time he gives a look of satisfaction at Graspum.

"Everything a man wants, in that yaller skin," returns that methodical tradesman, with a gracious nod.

"Black lightnin' eyes—long wiry black hair, a skin full of Ingin devil, and a face full of stubborn," Mr. Grabguy discourses, as he contemplates the article before him.,

"Well, now, about the lowest figure for him?" he continues, again looking at Graspum, and waiting his reply. That gentleman, drawing his right hand across his mouth, relieves it of the virtueless deposit, and supplies it with a fresh quid.

"Sit down, neighbour Grabguy," he says, placing a chair beside him. They both sit down; the negro attendant stands a few feet behind them: the boy may walk a line backward and forward. "Say the word! You know I'll have a deal a' trouble afore breaking the feller in," Grabguy exclaims, impatiently.

Graspum is invoking his philosophy. He will gauge the point of value according to the coming prospect and Mr. Grabguy's wants. "Well, now, seeing it's you, and taking the large amount of negro property I have sold to your distinguished father into consideration (I hope to sell forty thousand niggers yet, before I die), he should bring six hundred." Graspum lays his left hand modestly on Mr. Grabguy's right arm, as that gentleman rather starts with surprise. "Take the extraordinary qualities into conside-

ration, my friend; he's got a head what's worth two hundred dollars more nor a common nigger,—that is, if you be going to turn it into knowledge profit. But that wasn't just what I was going to say (Graspum becomes profound, as he spreads himself back in his chair). I was going to say, I'd let you—you mustn't whisper it, though—have him for five hundred and twenty; and he's as cheap at that as bull-dogs at five dollars."

Grabguy shakes his head: he thinks the price rather beyond his mark. He, however, has no objection to chalking on the figure; and as both are good democrats, they will split the difference.

Graspum, smiling, touches his customer significantly with his elbow. "I never do business after that model," he says.

"Speaking of bull-dogs, why, Lord bless your soul, Sam Beals and me traded t'other day: I gin him a young five-year old nigger for his bound, and two hundred dollars to boot. Can't go five hundred and twenty for that imp, nohow! Could a' got a prime nigger for that, two years ago."

"Wouldn't lower a fraction! He's extraordinary prime, and'll increase fifty dollars a year every year for ten years or more."

Mr. Grabguy can't help that: he is merely in search of an article capable of being turned into a mechanic, or professional man,—anything to suit the exigencies of a free country, in which such things are sold. And as it will require much time to get the article to a point where it'll be sure to turn the pennies back, perhaps he'd as well let it alone: so he turns the matter over in his head. And yet, there is a certain something about the "young imp" that really fascinates him; his keen eye, and deep sense of

nigger natur' value, detect the wonderful promise the article holds forth.

"Not one cent lower would I take for that chap. In fact, I almost feel like recanting now," says Graspum, by way of breaking the monotony.

"Well, I'll bid you good day," says the other, in return, affecting preparation to leave. He puts out his hand to Graspum, and with a serious look desires to know if that be the lowest figure.

"Fact! Don't care 'bout selling at that. Couldn't have a better investment than to keep him!"

Mr. Grabguy considers and reconsiders the matter over in his mind; paces up and down the floor several times, commences humming a tune, steps to the door, looks up and down the street, and says, "Well, I'll be moving homeward, I will."

"Like yer custom, that I do; but then, knowing what I can do with the fellow, I feels stiff about letting him go," interposes Graspum, with great indifference, following to the door, with hands extended.

This is rather too insinuating for Mr. Grabguy. Never did piece of property loom up so brightly, so physically and intellectually valuable. He will return to the table. Taking his seat again, he draws forth a piece of paper, and with his pencil commences figuring upon it. He wants to get at the cost of free and slave labour, and the relative advantages of the one over the other. After a deal of multiplying and subtracting, he gives it up in despair. The fine proportions of the youth before him distract his very brain with contemplation. He won't bother another minute; figures are only confusions: so far as using them to com-

pute the relative value of free and slave labour, they are enough to make one's head ache. "Would ye like to go with me, boy? Give ye enough to eat, but make ye toe the mark!" He looks at Nicholas, and waits a reply.

"Don't matter!" is the boy's answer. "Seems as if nobody cared for me; and so I don't care for nobody."

"That's enough," he interrupts, turning to Graspum: "there's a showing of grit in that, eh?"

"Soon take it out," rejoins that methodical gentleman. "Anyhow, I've a mind to try the fellow, Graspum. I feel the risk I run; but I don't mind—it's neck or nothin here in the south! Ye'll take a long note, s'pose? Good, ye know!"

Graspum motions his head and works his lips, half affirmatively.

"Good as old gold, ye knows that," insinuates Mr. Grabguy.

"Yes, but notes aint cash; and our banks are shut down as tight as steel traps. At all events make it bankable, and add the interest for six months. It's against my rules of business, though," returns Graspum, with great financial emphasis.

After considerably more very nice exhibitions of business tact, it is agreed that Mr. Grabguy takes the "imp" at five hundred and twenty dollars, for which Graspum accepts his note at six months, with interest. Mr. Grabguy's paper is good, and Graspum considers it equal to cash, less the interest. The "imp" is now left in charge of the negro, while the two gentlemen retire to the private counting-room, where they will settle the preliminaries.

A grave-looking gentleman at a large desk is ordered to

make the entry of sale; as the initiate of which he takes a ponderous ledger from the case, and, with great coolness, opens its large leaves. "Nicholas, I think his name is?" he ejaculates, turning to Graspum, who, unconcernedly, has resumed his seat in the great arm-chair.

"Yes; but I suppose it must be Nicholas Grabguy, now," returns Graspum, bowing to his book-keeper, and then turning to Mr. Grabguy.

"One minute, if you please!" rejoins that gentleman, as the sedate book-keeper turns to his page of N's in the index. Mr. Grabguy will consider that very important point for a few seconds.

"Better drop the Marston, as things are. A good many high feeling connections of that family remain; and to continue the name might be to give pain." This, Graspum says, he only puts out as a suggestion.

"Enter him as you say, gentlemen," interposes the clerk, who will mend his pen while waiting their pleasure.

Mr. Grabguy runs his right hand several times across his forehead, and after a breathless pause, thinks it as well not to connect his distinguished name with that of the nigger,—not just at this moment! Being his property, and associating with his business and people, that will naturally follow. "Just enter him, and make out the bill of sale describing him as the boy Nicholas," he adds.

"Boy Nicholas!" reiterates the book-keeper, and straightway enters his name, amount fetched, to whom sold, and general description, on his files. In a few minutes more—(Graspum, in his chair of state, is regretting having sold so quick)—Mr. Grabguy is handed his bill of sale, duly made out. At the same time, that sedate official places the note

for the amount into Graspum's hands. Graspum examines it minutely, while Mr. Grabguy surveys the bill of sale. "Mr. Benson, my clerk here, does these things up according to legal tenour; he, let me inform you, was brought up at the law business, and was rather celebrated once; but the profession won't pay a man of his ability," remarks Graspum, with an "all right!" as he lays the note of hand down for Mr. Grabguy's signature.

Mr. Benson smiles in reply, and adjusts the very stiffly starched corners of his poudorous shirt collar, which he desires to keep well closed around his chin. "An honourable man, that's true, sir, can't live honestly by the law, now-a-days," he concludes, with measured sedateness. He will now get his bill-book, in which to make a record of the piece of paper taken in exchange for the human 'imp.'

"Clap your name across the face!" demands Graspum; and Grabguy seizes a pen, and quickly consummates the bargain by inscribing his name, passing it to Mr. Benson, and, in return, receiving the bill of sale, which he places in his breast pocket. He will not trouble Mr. Benson any further; but, if he will supply a small piece of paper, Mr. Grabguy will very kindly give the imp an order, and send him to his workshop.

"Will the gentleman be kind enough to help himself," says Mr. Benson, passing a quire upon the table at which Mr. Grabguy sits.

"I'll trim that chap into a first-rate mechanic," says Mr. Grabguy, as he writes,—"I have bought the bearer, Nicholas, a promising chap, as you will see. Take him into the shop and set him at something, if it is only turning the grindstone; as I hav'nt made up my mind

exactly about what branch to set him at. He's got temper—you'll see that in a minute, and will want some breakin in, if I don't calklate 'rong." This Mr. Grabguy envelopes, and directs to his master mechanic. When all things are arranged to his satisfaction, Nicholas is again brought into his presence, receives an admonition, is told what he may expect if he displays his bad temper, is invested with the note, and despatched, with sundry directions, to seek his way alone, to his late purchaser's workshop.

"Come, boy! ain't you going to say 'good-by' to me 'afore you go? I hav'nt been a bad master to you," says Graspum, putting out his hand.

"Yes, master," mutters the child, turning about ere he reaches the door. He advances towards Graspum, puts out his little hand; and in saying "good by, master," there is so much childish simplicity in his manner that it touches the tender chord embalmed within that iron frame. "Be a good little fellow!" he says, his emotions rising. How strong are the workings of nature when brought in contact with unnatural laws! The monster who has made the child wretched—who has for ever blasted its hopes, shakes it by the hand, and says—"good by, little 'un!" as it leaves the door to seek the home of a new purchaser. How strange the thoughts invading that child's mind, as, a slave for life, it plods its way through the busy thoroughfares! Forcibly the happy incidents of the past are recalled; they are touching recollections,—sweets in the dark void of a slave's life: but to him no way-marks to measure the happy home embalmed therein are left.

CHAPTER XXXV.

IN WHICH DEMOCRACY'S WORKINGS ARE SHOWN.

DEMOCRACY! thy trumpet voice for liberty is ever ringing in our ears; but thy strange workings defame thee. Thou art rampant in love of the "popular cause," crushing of that which secures liberty to all; and, whilst thou art great at demolishing structures, building firm foundations seems beyond thee, for thereto thou forgetteth to lay the corner-stone well on the solid rock of principle. And, too, we love thee when thou art moved and governed by justice; we hate thee when thou showest thyself a sycophant to make a mad mob serve a pestilential ambition. Like a young giant thou graspest power; but, when in thy hands, it becomes a means of serving the baser ends of factious demagogues. Hypocrite! With breath of poison thou hast sung thy songs to liberty while making it a stepping-stone to injustice; nor hast thou ever ceased to wage a tyrant's war against the rights of man. Thou wearest false robes; thou blasphemest against heaven, that thy strength in wrong may be secure—yea, we fear thy end is fast coming badly, for thou art the bastard offspring of Republicanism so purely planted in our land. Clamour and the lash are thy sceptres, and, like a viper seeking its prey, thou charmest with one and goadeth men's souls with the other. Having worked thy way through our simple narrative, show us what thou hast done? A father hast thou driven within the humid wall of a prison, because he would repent and acknowledge his child. Bolts and bars, in such cases, are democracy's safeguards; but thou

hast bound with heavy chains the being who would rise in the world, and go forth healing the sick and preaching God's word. Even hast thou turned the hearts of men into stone, and made them weep at the wrong thou gavest them power to inflict. That bond which God gave to man, and charged him to keep sacred, thou hast sundered for the sake of gold,—thereby levelling man with the brutes of the field. Thou hast sent two beautiful children to linger in the wickedness of slavery,—to die stained with its infamy ! Thou hast robbed many a fair one of her virtue, stolen many a charm ; but thy foulest crime is, that thou drivest mothers and fathers from the land of their birth to seek shelter on foreign soil. Would to God thou could'st see thyself as thou art,—make thy teachings known in truth and justice,—cease to mock thyself in the eyes of foreign tyrants, nor longer serve despots who would make thee the shield of their ill-gotten power !

Within those mahrious prison walls, where fast decays a father who sought to save from slavery's death the offspring he loved, will be found a poor, dejected negro, sitting at the bedside of the oppressed man, administering to his wants. His friendship is true unto death,—the oppressed man is his angel, he will serve him at the sacrifice of life and liberty. He is your true republican, the friend of the oppressed ! Your lessons of democracy, so swelling, so boastfully arrayed for a world's good, have no place in his soul,—goodness alone directs his examples of republicanism. But we must not be over venturous in calling democracy to account, lest we offend the gods of power and progress. We will, to save ourselves, return to our narrative.

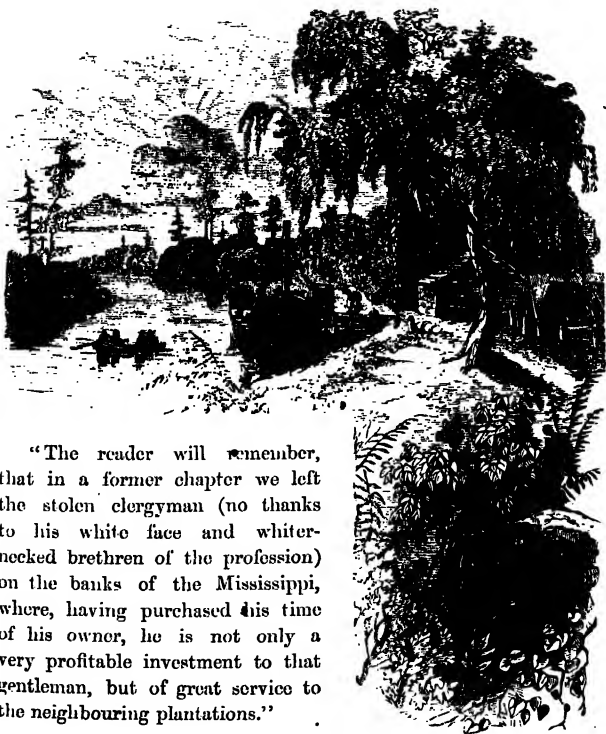
Marston, yet in gaol, stubbornly refuses to take the

benefit of the act,—commonly called the poor debtor's act. He has a faithful friend in Daddy Bob, who has kept his ownership concealed, and, with the assistance of Franconia, still relieves his necessities. Rumour, however, strongly whispers that Colonel M'Carstrow is fast gambling away his property, keeping the worst of company, and leading the life of a debauchee,—which sorely grieves his noble-hearted wife. In fact, Mrs. Templeton, who is chief gossip-monger of the city, declares that he is more than ruined, and that his once beautiful wife must seek support at something.

An honest jury of twelve free and enlightened citizens, before the honourable court of Sessions, have declared Romescos honourably acquitted of the charge of murder, the fatal blow being given in commendable self-defence.

The reader will remember that in a former chapter we left the stolen clergyman (no thanks to his white face and whiter necked brethren of the profession), on the banks of the Mississippi, where, having purchased his time of his owner, he is not only a very profitable investment to that gentleman, but of great service on the neighbouring plantations. Earnest in doing good for his fellow bondmen, his efforts have enlisted for him the sympathy of a generous-hearted young lady, the daughter of a neighbouring planter. Many times had he recounted Mrs. Rosebrook's friendship for him to her, and by its influence succeeded in opening the desired communication. Mrs. Rosebrook had received and promptly answered all his fair friend's letters: the answers contained good news for Harry; she knew him well, and would at once set about inducing her husband to purchase him. But here again his profession

PLATE VI.



"The reader will remember, that in a former chapter we left the stolen clergyman (no thanks to his white face and whiter-necked brethren of the profession) on the banks of the Mississippi, where, having purchased his time of his owner, he is not only a very profitable investment to that gentleman, but of great service to the neighbouring plantations."

ROSEBROOK RETURNING WITH HARRY FROM MAJOR WILEY'S PLANTATION
ON THE TALLAHATCHIE.

interposed a difficulty, inasmuch as its enhancing the value of the property to so great an extent would make his master reluctant to part with him. However, as nothing could be more expressive of domestic attachment than the manner in which the Rosebrooks studied each other's feelings for the purpose of giving a more complete happiness, our good lady had but to make known her wish, and the deacon stood ready to execute it. In the present case he was but too glad of the opportunity of gratifying her feelings, having had the purchase of a clergyman in contemplation for some months back. He sought Harry out, and, after bartering (the planter setting forth what a deal of money he had made by his clergyman) succeeded in purchasing him for fourteen hundred dollars, the gentleman producing legalised papers of his purchase, and giving the same. As for his running away, there is no evidence to prove that; nor will Harry's pious word be taken in law to disclose the kidnapping. McFadden is dead,—his estate has long since been administered upon; Romescos murdered the proof, and swept away the dangerous contingency.

Here, then, we find Harry (we must pass over the incidents of his return back in the old district) about to administer the Gospel to the negroes on the Rosebrook estates. He is the same good, generous-hearted black man he was years ago. But he has worked hard, paid his master a deal of money for his time, and laid up but little for himself. His clothes, too, are somewhat shabby, which, in the estimation of the Rosebrook negroes (who are notoriously aristocratic in their notions), is some detriment to his ministerial character. At the same time, they are not quite sure that Harry Marston, as he must now be

called, will preach to please their peculiar mode of thinking. Master and missus have given them an interest in their labour; and, having lain by a little money in missus's savings bank, they are all looking forward to the time when they will have gained their freedom, according to the promises held out. With these incitements of renewed energy they work cheerfully, take a deep interest in the amount of crop produced, and have a worthy regard for their own moral condition. And as they will now pay tribute for the support of a minister of the Gospel, his respectability is a particular object of their watchfulness. Thus, Harry's first appearance on the plantation, shabbily dressed, is viewed with distrust. Uncle Bradshaw, and old Bill, the coachman, and Aunt Sophy, and Sophy's two gals, and their husbands, are heard in serious conclave to say that "It won't do!" A clergy gentleman, with no better clothes than that new-comer wears, can't preach good and strong, nohow! Dad Daniel is heard to say. Bradshaw shakes his white head, and says he's goin' to have a short talk with master about it. Something must be done to reconcile the matter.

Franconia and good Mrs. Rosebrook are not so exacting: the latter has received him with a warm welcome, while the former, her heart bounding with joy on hearing of his return, hastened into his presence, and with the affection of a child shook, and shook, and shook his hand, as he fell on his knees and kissed hers. "Poor Harry!" she says, "how I have longed to see you, and your poor wife and children!"

"Ah, Franconia, my young missus, it is for them my soul fears."

"But we have found out where they are," she interrupts.

"Where they are!" he reiterates.

"Indeed we have!" Franconia makes a significant motion with her head.

"It's true, Harry; and we'll see what can be done to get them back, one of these days," adds Mrs. Rosebrook, her soul-glowing eyes affirming the truth of her assertion. They have come out to spend the day at the plantation, and a happy day it is for those whose hearts they gladden with their kind words. How happy would be our south—how desolate the mania for abolition—if such a comity of good feeling between master and slaves existed on every plantation! And there is nothing to hinder such happy results of kindness.

"When that day comes, missus,—that day my good old woman and me will be together again,—how happy I shall be! Seems as if the regaining that one object would complete my earthly desires. And my children,—how much I have felt for them, and how little I have said!" returns Harry, as, seated in the veranda of the plantation mansion, the two ladies near him are watching his rising emotions.

"Never mind, Harry," rejoins Franconia; "it will all be well, one of these days. You, as well as uncle, must bear with trouble. It is a world of trouble and trial." She draws her chair nearer him, and listens to his narrative of being carried off,—his endeavours to please his strange master down in Mississippi,—the curious manner in which his name was changed,—the sum he was compelled to pay for his time, and the good he effected while pursuing the object of his mission on the neighbouring plantations. Hope carried him through every trial,—hope prepared his heart for the time of his delivery,—hope filled his soul with gratitude to his Maker, and hope, which ever held

its light of freedom before him, inspired him with that prayer he so thankfully bestowed on the head of his benefactor, whose presence was as the light of love borne to him on angels' wings. "

Moved to tears by his recital of past struggles, and the expression of natural goodness exhibited in the resignation with which he bore them, ever praying and trusting to Him who guides our course in life, Franconia in turn commenced relating the misfortunes that had befallen her uncle. She tells him how her uncle has been reduced to poverty through Lorenzo's folly, and Graspum, the negro dealer's undiscoverable mode of ensnaring the unwary. He has been importuned, harassed, subjected to every degradation and shame, scouted by society for attempting to save those beautiful children, Annette and Nicholas, from the snares of slavery. And he now welters in a debtor's prison, with few save his old faithful Daddy Bob for friends.

"Master, and my old companion, Baddy Bob!" exclaims Harry, interrupting her at the moment.

"Yes: Daddy takes care of him in his prison cell."

"How often old Bob's expressive face has looked upon me in my dreams! how often he has occupied my thoughts by day!"

"Goodness belongs to him by nature."

"And master is in prison; but Daddy is still his friend and faithful! Well, my heart sorrows for master: I know his proud heart bleeds under the burden," he says, shaking his head sorrowfully. There is more sympathy concealed beneath that black exterior than words can express. He will go and see master; he will comfort him within his prison walls; he will rejoin Daddy Bob, and be master's

friend once more. Mrs. Rosebrook, he is sure, will grant him any privilege in her power. That good lady is forthwith solicited, and grants Harry permission to go into the city any day it suits his convenience—except Sunday, when his services are required for the good of the people on the plantation. Harry is delighted with this token of her goodness, and appoints a day when he will meet Miss Franconia,—as he yet calls her,—and go see old master and Daddy. How glowing is that honest heart, as it warms with ecstasy at the thought of seeing “old master,” even though he be degraded within prison walls!

While this conversation is going on in the veranda, sundry aged members of negro families—aunties and mamnies—are passing backwards and forwards in front of the house, casting curious glances at the affection exhibited for the new preacher by “Miss Franconia.” The effect is a sort of reconciliation of the highly aristocratic objections they at first interposed against his reception. “Mus’ be somebody bigger dan common nigger preacher; wudn’t cotch Miss Frankone spoken wid ’um if ’um warn’t,” says Dad Timothy’s Jane, who is Uncle Absalom’s wife, and, in addition to having six coal-black children, as fat and sleek as beavers, is the wise woman of the cabins, around whom all the old veteran mamnies gather for explanations upon most important subjects. In this instance she is surrounded by six or seven grave worthies, whose comical faces add great piquancy to the conclave. Grandmamma Dorothy, who declares that she is grandmother to she don’t know how much little growing-up property, will venture every grey hair in her head—which is as white as the snows of Nova Scotia—that he knows a deal a’ things about the

gospel, or he wouldn't have missus for such a close acquaintance. "But his shirt ain't just da'h fashion fo'h a 'spectable minister ob de gospel," she concludes, with 'profound wisdom evinced in her measured nod.

Aunt Betsey, than whose face none is blacker, or more comically moulded, will say her word; but she is very profound withal. "Reckon how tain't de cloe what make e' de preacher tink good (Aunty's lip hangs seriously low the while). Lef missus send some calico fum town, and dis old woman son fix 'um into shirt fo'h him," she says, with great assurance of her sincerity.

Harry—Mister Harry, as he is to be called by the people—finds himself comfortably at home; the only drawback, if such it may be called, existing in the unwillingness exhibited on the part of one of the overseers, to his being provided with apartments in the basement of the house instead of one of the cabins. This, however, is, by a few conciliatory words from Mrs. Rosebrook, settled to the satisfaction of all. Harry has supper provided for him in one of the little rooms downstairs, which he is to make his Study, and into which he retires for the night.

When daylight has departed, and the very air seems hanging in stillness over the plantation, a great whispering is heard in Dad Daniel's cabin—(the-head quarters, where grave matters of state, or questions affecting the moral or physical interests of the plantation, are discussed, and Dad Daniel's opinion held as most learned), the importance of which over the other cabins is denoted by three windows, one just above the door being usually filled with moss or an old black hat. Singular enough, on approaching the cabin it is discovered that Daniel has convoked a senate of his

sable brethren, to whom he is proposing a measure of great importance. "Da'h new preacher, gemen ! is one ob yer own colour—no more Buckra what on e' gib dat one sarmon,—tank God fo'h dat !—and dat colour geman, my children, ye must look up to fo'h de word from de good book. Now, my bredren, 'tis posin' on ye dat ye make dat geman 'spectable. I poses den, dat we, bredren, puts in a mite apiece, and gib dat ar' geman new suit ob fus' bes'clof', so 'e preach fresh and clean," Dad Daniel is heard to say. And this proposition is carried out on the following morning, when Daddy Daniel (his white wool so cleanly washed, and his face glowing with great good-nature) accompanied by a conclave of his sable compatriots, presents himself in the front veranda, and demands to see "missus." That all-conciliating personage is ever ready to receive deputations, and on making her appearance, and receiving the usual salutations from her people, receives from the hand of that venerable prime minister, Daddy Daniel, a purse containing twelve dollars and fifty cents. It is the amount of a voluntary contribution—a gift for the new preacher. "Missus" is requested, after adding her portion, to expend it in a suit of best black for the new-comer, who they would like to see, and say "how de, to."

Missus receives this noble expression of their gratitude with thanks and kind words. Harry is summoned to the veranda, where, on making his appearance, he is introduced to Dad Daniel, who, in return, escorts him down on the piazza where numbers of the people have assembled to receive him. Here, with wondrous ceremony, Dad Daniel doing the polite rather strong, he is introduced to all the important people of the plantation. And such a shaking of hands, earnest congratulations,

happy "how des," bows, and joyous laughs, as follow, place the scene so expressive of happiness beyond the power of pen to describe. Then he is led away, followed by a train of curious faces, to see Dad Daniel's neatly-arranged cabin; after which he will see plantation church, and successively the people's cabins. To-morrow evening, at early dusk, it is said, according to invitation and arrangement, he will sup on the green with his sable brethren, old and young, and spice up the evening's entertainment with an exhortation; Dad Daniel, as is his custom, performing the duties of deacon.

Let us pass over this scene, and—Harry having ingratiated himself with the plantation people, who are ready to give him their distinguished consideration—ask the reader to follow us through the description of another, which took place a few days after.

Our clergyman has delivered to his sable flock his first sermon, which Dad Daniel and his compatriots pronounce great and good,—just what a sermon should be. Such pathos they never heard before; the enthusiasm and fervency with which it was delivered inspires delight; they want no more earnestness of soul than the fervency with which his gesticulations accompanied the words; and now he has obtained a furlough that he may go into the city and console his old master. A thrill of commiseration seizes him as he contemplates his once joyous master now in prison; but, misgivings being useless, onward he goes. And he will see old Bob, recall the happy incidents of the past, when time went smoothly on.

He reaches the city, having tarried a while at missus's villa, and seeks M'Carstrow's residence, at the door of which

he is met by Franconia, who receives him gratefully, and orders a servant to show him into the recess of the hall, where he will wait until such time as she is ready to accompany him to the county prison. M'Carstrow has recently removed into plainer tenements: some whisper that necessity compelled it, and that the "large shot" gamblers have shorn him down to the lowest imaginable scale of living. Be this as it may, certain it is that he has not looked within the doors of his own house for more than a week: report says he is enjoying himself in a fashionable house, to the inmates of which he is familiarly known. He certainly leads his beautiful wife anything but a pleasant or happy life. Soon Franconia is ready, and onward wending her way for the gaol, closely followed by Harry. She would have no objection to his walking by her side, but custom (intolerant interposer) will not permit it. They pass through busy thoroughfares and narrow streets into the suburbs, and have reached the prison outer gate, on the right hand of which, and just above a brass knob, are the significant words, "Ring the bell."

"What a place to put master in!" says Harry, in a half whisper, turning to Franconia, as he pulls the brass handle and listens for the dull tinkling of the bell within. He starts at the muffled summons, and sighs as he hears the heavy tread of the officer, advancing through the corridor to challenge his presence. The man advances, and has reached the inner iron gate, situated in a narrow, vaulted arch in the main building. A clanking and clicking sound is heard, and the iron door swings back: a thick-set man, with features of iron, advances to the stoop, down the steps, and to the gate. "What's here now?" he growls, rather than

speaks, looking sternly at the coloured man, as he thrusts his left hand deep into his side pocket, while holding the key of the inner door in his right.

"Visitor," returns Franconia, modestly.

"Who does the nigger want to see?" he enquires, with pertinacity in keeping with his profession.

"His old master!" is the quick reply.

"You both? I guess I know what it is,—you want to see Marston: he used to be a rice-planter, but 's now in the debtor's ward for a swimming lot of debts. Well, s'pose I must let you in: got a lot a' things, I s'pose?" he says, looking wickedly through the bars as he springs the bolts, and swings back the gate. "I beg yer pardon a dozen times! but I didn't recognise ye on the outer side," continues the official, becoming suddenly servile. "He makes a low bow as he recognises Franconia—motions his hand for them to walk ahead. They reach the steps leading to the inner gate, and ascending, soon are in the vaulted passage.

If they will allow him, the polite official will unlock the grated door. Stepping before Franconia, who, as the clanking of the locks grate on her ear, is seized with sensations she cannot describe, he inserts the heavy key. She turns to Harry, her face pallid as marble, and lays her tremulous hand on his arm, as if to relieve the nervousness with which she is seized. Click! click! sounds forth: again the door creaks on its hinges, and they are in the confines of the prison. A narrow vaulted arch, its stone walls moistened with pestilential malaria, leads into a small vestibule, on the right hand of which stretched a narrow aisle lined on both sides with cells. Damp and pestiferous, a

hollow gloominess seems to pervade the place, as if it were a pest-house for torturing the living. Even the air breathes of disease,—a stench, as of dead men buried in its vaults, darts its poison deep into the system. * It is this, coupled with the mind's discontent, that commits its ravages upon the poor prisoner,—that sends him pale and haggard to a soon-forgotten grave.

"Last door on the right,—you know, mum," says the official: "boy will follow, lightly: whist! whist!"

"I know, to my sorrow," is her reply, delivered in a whisper. Ah! her emotions are too tender for prison walls; they are yielding tears from the fountain of her very soul.

"He's sick: walk softly, and don't think of the prisoners. Knock at the door afore enterin'," says a staid-looking warden, emerging from a small door on the left hand of the vestibule.

"Zist! zist!" returns the other, pointing with the forefinger of his right hand down the aisle, and, placing his left, gently, on Franconia's shoulder, motioning her to move on.

Slowly, her handkerchief to her face, she obeys the sign, and is moving down the corridor, now encountering anxious eyes peering through the narrow grating of huge black doors. And then a faint dolorous noise lists its sound on the ear. They pause for a moment,—listen again! It becomes clearer and clearer; and they advance listening with anxious curiosity. "It's Daddy Bob's voice," whispers Harry; "but how distant it sounds!"

"Even that murmurs in his confinement," returns Franconia.

"How, like a thing of life, it recalls the past—the past

of happiness!" says Harry, as they reach the cell door, and, tremulously, hesitate for a few moments.

"Listen again!" continues Harry. The sound having ceased a moment or two, again commences, and the words

"There's a place for old mas'r yet,
And de Lord will sec him dar,"

are distinctly audible. "How the old man battles for his good master!" returns Harry, as Franconia taps gently on the door. The wooden trap over the grating is closed; bolts hang carelessly from their staples; and yet, though the door is secured with a hook on the inside, disease and death breathe their morbid fumes through the scarce perceptible crevices. A whispering—"Come in!" is heard in reply to the tap upon the door, which slowly opens, and the face of old Bob, bathed in grief, protrudes round the frame. "Oh, missus—missus—missus—God give good missus spirit!" he exclaims, seizing Franconia fervently by the hand, and looking in her face imploringly. A foetid stench pervaded the atmosphere of the gloomy cell; it is death spreading its humid malaria. "Good old master is g—g—g—gone!" mutters the negro, in half-choked accents.

With a wild shriek, the noble woman rushes to the side of his prison cot, seizes his blanched hand that hangs carelessly over the iron frame, grasps his head frantically, and draws it to her bosom, as the last gurgle of life bids adieu to the prostrate body. He is dead!

The old slave has watched over him, shared his sorrows and his crust, has sung a last song to his departing spirit. How truthful was that picture of the dying master and

his slave! The old man, struggling against the infirmities of age, had escaped the hands of the man-seller, served his master with but one object—his soul's love—and relieved his necessities, until death, ending his troubles, left no more to relieve. Now, distracted between joy at meeting Harry, and sorrow for the death of master, the poor old man is lost in the confusion of his feelings. After saluting Franconia, he turned to Harry, threw his arms around his neck, buried his head in his bosom, and wept like a child. "Home—home again,—my Harry! but too late to see mas'r," he says, as the fountains of his soul give out their streams.

"We must all go where master has gone," returns Harry, as he, more calm, fondles the old man, and endeavours to reconcile his feelings. "Sit there, my old friend—sit there; and remember that God called master away. I must go to his bed-side," whispers Harry, seating the old man on a block of wood near the foot of the cot, where he pours forth the earnest of his grief.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ONLY AN ITEM IN THE COMMON CALENDAR OF SOUTHERN
EVENTS.

THUS painfully has Marston paid his debtors. Around his lifeless body may spring to life those sympathies which were dead while he lived; but deplorings fall useless on dead men. There is one consideration, however, which must always be taken into account; it is, that while sympathy for the living may cost something, sympathy for the dead is cheap indeed, and always to be had. How simply plain is the dead man's cell! In this humid space, ten by sixteen feet, and arched over-head, is a bucket of water, with a tin cup at the side, a prison tub in one corner, two wooden chairs, a little deal stand, (off which the prisoner ate his meals), and his trunk of clothing. The sheriff, insisting that it was his rule to make no distinction of persons, allowed prison cot and prison mattress; to which, by the kind permission of the warden, Franconia added sheets and a coverlit. Upon this, in a corner at the right, and opposite a spacious fire-place, in which are two bricks supporting a small iron kettle, lies the once opulent planter,—now with eyes glassy and discoloured, a ghastly corpse. His house once was famous for its princely hospitality,—the prison cot is not now his bequest: but it is all the world has left him: on which to yield up his life. “Oh, uncle! uncle! uncle!” exclaims Franconia, who has been bathing his contorted face with her tears, “would

that God had taken me too—buried our troubles in one grave! There is no trouble in that world to which he has gone: joy, virtue, and peace, reign triumphant there,” she speaks, sighing, as she raises her bosom from off the dead man. Harry has touched her on the shoulder with his left hand, and is holding the dead man’s with his right: he seems in deep contemplation. His mind is absorbed in the melancholy scene; but, though his affection is deep, he has no tears to shed at this moment. No; he will draw a chair for Franconia, and seat her near the head of the cot, for the fountains of her grief have overflowed. Discoloured and contorted, what a ghastly picture the dead man’s face presents! Glassy, and with vacant glare, those eyes, strange of death, seem wildly staring upward from earth. How unnatural those sunken cheeks—those lips wet with the excrement of black vomit—that throat reddened with the pestilential poison! “Call a warden, Daddy!” says Harry; “he has died of black vomit, I think.” And he lays the dead body square upon the cot, turns the sheets from off the shoulders, unbuttons the collar of its shirt. “How changed! I never would have known master; but I can see something of him left yet.” Harry remains some minutes looking upon the face of the departed, as if tracing some long lost feature. And then he takes his hands—its master’s hand, he says—and places them gently to his sides, closes his glassy eyes, wipes his mouth and nostrils, puts his ear to the dead man’s mouth, as if doubting the all-slayer’s possession of the body, and with his right hand parts the matted hair from off the cold brow. What a step between the cares of the world and the peace of death! Harry smooths, and smooths, and smooths his forehead with his hand;

until at length his feelings get the better of his resolution; he will wipe the dewy tears from his eyes. Don't weep, Miss Franconia,—don't weep! master is happy with Jesus,—happier than all the plantations and slaves of the world could make him," he says, turning to her as she sits weeping, her elbow resting on the cot, and her face buried in her handkerchief.

"Bad job this here!" exclaims the warden, as he comes lumbering into the cell, his face flushed with anxiety. "This yaller-fever beats everything: but he hasn't been well for some time," he continues, advancing to the bed-side, looking on the deceased for a few minutes, and then, as if it were a part of his profession to look on dead men, says: "How strange to die out so soon!"

"He was a good master," rejoins Harry.

"He wasn't your master—Was he?" enquires the gaoler, in gruff accents.

"Once he was."

"But, did you see him die, boy?"

"Thank God, I did not."

"And this stupid old nigger hadn't sense to call me!" (he turns threateningly to Bob): "Well,—must 'a drop'd off like the snuff of a tallow candle!"

Daddy knew master was a poor man now;—calling would have availed nothing; gaolers are bad friends of poverty.

"Could you not have sent for me, good man?" enquires Franconia, her weeping eyes turning upon the warden, who says, by way of answering her question, "We must have him out 'a here."

"I said mas'r was sicker den ye s'posed, yesterday; nor ye

didn't notice 'um !" interposes Bob, giving a significant look at the warden, and again at Franconia.

"What a shame, in this our land of boasted hospitality ! He died neglected in a prison cell !"

"Truth is, ma'am," interrupts the warden, who, suddenly becoming conscious that it is polite to be courteous to ladies wherever they may be met, uncovers, and holds his hat in his hand,—“we are sorely tried with black-vomit cases ; no provisions is made for them, and they die on our hands afore we know it, just like sheep with the rot. It gives us a great deal of trouble ;—you may depend it does, ma'am ; and not a cent extra pay do we get for it. For my own part, I've become quite at home to dead men and prisoners. My name is—(you have no doubt heard of me before)—John Lafayette Flewellen : my situation was once, madam, that of a distinguished road contractor ; and then they run me for the democratic senator from our district, and I lost all my money without getting the office—and here I am now, pestered with sick men and dead prisoners. And the very worst is that you can't please nobody ; but if anything is wanted, ma'am, just call for me : John Lafayette Flewellen's my name, ma'am. The man of nerve, with curious indifference, is about to turn away,—to leave the mourning party to themselves, merely remarking, as he takes his hand from the forehead of the corpse, that his limbs are becoming *frigid*, fast.

“Stay—a-moment,—warder” says Franconia, sobbing : “When was he seized with the fever ?”

“Day afore yesterday, ma'am ; but he didn't complain until yesterday. That he was in a dangerous way I'm sure

I'd no idea." The warden shrugs his shoulders, and spreads his hands. My eyes, ma'am, but he drank strongly of late! Perhaps that, combined with the fever, helped slide him off?"

"Ah! yes,—it was something else—it was grief! His troubles were his destroyr." She wipes her eyes, and, with a look of commiseration, turns from the man whose business it is to look coldly upon unfortunate dead men.

"There was the things you sent him, ma'am; and he got his gaol allowance, and some gruel. The law wouldn't allow us to do more for him,—no, it wouldn't!" He shakes his head in confirmation.

"I wanted old mas'r to let 'um bring doctor; but he said no! he would meet de doctor what cured all diseases in another world," interrupts old Bob, as he draws his seat close to the foot of the cot, and, with his shining face of grief, gazes on the pale features of his beloved master.

"Let him lie as he is, till the coroner comes," says the warden, retiring slowly, and drawing the heavy door after him.

The humble picture was no less an expression of goodness, than proof of the cruel severity of the law. The news of death soon brought curious debtors into the long aisle, while sorrow and sympathy might be read on every face. But he was gone, and with him his wants and grievances. A physician was called in, but he could not recall life, and, after making a few very learned and unintelligible remarks on the appearance of the body, took his departure, saying that they must not grieve—that it was the way all flesh would go. He, no doubt, died of the black

vomit, hastened by the want of care," he concluded, as he left the cell.

"Want of care!" rejoins Franconia, again giving vent to her feelings. How deeply did the arrow dart into the recesses of her already wounded heart!

Mr. Moon, the methodical coroner, was not long repairing to the spot. He felt, and felt, and felt the dead man's limbs, asked a few questions, bared the cold breast, ordered the body to be straightened a little, viewed it from several angles, and said an inquest was unnecessary. It would reveal no new facts, and, as so many were dying of the same disease, could give no more relief to his friends. Concerning his death, no one could doubt the cause being black vomit. With a frigid attempt at consolation for Franconia, he will withdraw. He has not been long gone, when the warden, a sheet over his left arm, again makes his appearance; he passes the sheet to Harry, with a request that he will wind the dead creditor up in it.

Franconia, sobbing, rises from her seat, opens a window at the head of the cot (the dead will not escape through the iron grating), and paces the floor, while Harry and Daddy sponge the body, lay it carefully down, and fold it in the winding-sheet. "Poor master,—God has taken him; but how I shall miss him! I've spent happy days wid 'un in dis place, I have!" says Bob, as they lay his head on the hard pillow. He gazes upon him with affection,—and says: "Mas'r 'll want no more clothes."

And now night is fast drawing its dark mantle over the scene,—the refulgent shadows of the setting sun play through the grated window into the gloomy cell: how like a spirit of goodness sent from on high to lighten the sorrows

of the downcast, seems the light. A faint ray plays its soft tints on that face now pallid in death; how it inspires our thoughts of heaven! Franconia watches, and watches, as fainter and fainter 't fades away, like an angel sent for the spirit taking its departure. "Farewell!" she whispers, as darkness shuts out the last mellow glimmer: "Come, sombre night, and spread thy stillness!"

The warden, moved by the spark of generosity his soul possesse, has brought some cologne, and silently places it in Franconia's hands. She advances to the cot, seats herself near the head of her dear departed, encircles his head with her left arm, and with her white 'kerchief bathes his face with the liquid, Harry holding the vessel in his hand, at her request. A candle sheds its sickly light upon the humid walls; faintly it discloses the face of Daddy Bob, immersed in tears, watching, intently over the foot of the cot. "Missus Frankone is alw's kind to mas'r!"

"I loved uncle because his heart was good," returns Franconia.

"'Tis dat, missus. How kindly old mas'r, long time ago, used to say, 'Good mornin', Bob! Daddy, mas'r lubs you!'"

How firmly the happy recollection of these kind words is sealed in the old man's memory.

PLATE VII.



THE DYING MASTER AND HIS SLAVE.

‘Farewell!’ she whispers, as darkness shuts out the last mellow •
glimmer.”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN WHICH REGRETS ARE SHOWN OF LITTLE WORTH.

THE reader may remember, that we, in the early part of our narrative, made some slight mention of the Rovero family, of which Franconia and Lorenzo were the only surviving children. They, too, had been distinguished as belonging to a class of opulent planters; but, having been reduced to poverty by the same nefarious process through which we have traced Marston's decline, and which we shall more fully disclose in the sequel, had gathered together the remnants of a once extensive property, and with the proceeds migrated to a western province of Mexico, where, for many years, though with not much success, Rovero pursued a mining speculation. They lived in a humble manner; Mrs. Rovero, Marston's sister—and of whom we have a type in the character of her daughter, Franconia—discarded all unnecessary appurtenances of living, and looked forward to the time when they would be enabled to retrieve their fortunes and return to their native district to spend the future of their days on the old homestead. More than four years, however, had passed since any tidings had been received of them by Franconia; and it was strongly surmised that they had fallen victims to the savage incursions of marauding parties, who were at that time devastating the country, and scattering its defenceless inhabitants home-

less over the western shores of central America. So strong had this impression found place in Franconia's mind that she had given up all hopes of again meeting them. As for M'Carstrow's friends, they had never taken any interest in her welfare, viewing her marriage with the distinguished colonel as a mere catch on the part of her parents, whose only motive was to secure themselves the protection of a name, and, perhaps, the means of sustaining themselves above the rank disclosure of their real poverty. To keep "above board" is everything in the south; and the family not *distinguished* soon finds itself well nigh extinguished. Hence that ever tenacious clinging to pretensions, sounding of important names, and maintenance of absurd fallacies,—all having for their end the drawing a curtain over that real state of poverty there existing. Indeed, it was no secret that even the M'Carstrow family (counting itself among the very few really distinguished families of the state, and notorious for the contempt in which they affected to hold all common people), had mortgaged their plantation and all its negroes for much more than their worth in ordinary times. As for tradesmen's bills, there were any quantity outstanding, without the shadow of a prospect of their being paid, notwithstanding importuners had frequently intimated that a place called the gaol was not far distant, and that the squire's office was within a stone's throw of "the corner." Colonel M'Carstrow, reports say, had some years ago got a deal of money by an unexplainable *hocus pocus*, but it was well nigh gone in gambling, and now he was keeping brothel society and rioting away his life faster than the race-horses he had formerly kept on the course could run. .

Hospitality hides itself when friends come needy ; and it will be seen here that Franconia had few friends (we mean friends in need.) The Rosebrook family formed an exception. The good deacon, and his ever generous lady, had remained Franconia's firmest friends ; but so large and complicated were the demands against Marston, and so gross the charges of dishonour (suspicion said he fraudulently made over his property to Graspum), that they dared not interpose for his relief ; nor would Marston himself have permitted it. The question now was, what was to be done with the dead body ?

We left Franconia bathing its face, and smoothing the hair across its temples with her hand. She cannot bury it from her own home :—no ! M'Carstrow will not permit that. She cannot consign it to the commissioners for the better regulation of the "poor house,"—her feelings repulse the thought. One thought lightens her cares ; she will straightway proceed to Mrs. Rosebrook's villa,—herself be the bearer of the mournful intelligence ; while Harry will watch over the remains of the departed, until Daddy, who must be her guide through the city, returns. "I will go to prepare the next resting-place for uncle," says Franconia, as if nerving herself to carry out the resolution.

"With your permission, missus," returns Harry, touching her on the arm, and pointing through the grated window into the gloomy yard. "Years since—before I passed through a tribulation worse than death—when we were going to be sold in the market, I called my brothers and sisters of the plantation together, and in that yard invoked heaven to be merciful to its fallen. I was sold on that day ; but heaven has been merciful to me ; heaven has

guided me through many weary pilgrimages, and brought me here to-night; and its protecting hand will yet restore me my wife and little ones. Let us pray to-night; let us be grateful to Him who seeth the fallen in his tribulation, but prepareth a place for him in a better world. Let us pray and hope," he continued: and they knelt at the side of the humble cot on which lay the departed, while he devoutly and fervently invoked the Giver of all Good to forgive the oppressor, to guide the oppressed, to make man feel there is a world beyond this, to strengthen the resolution of that fair one who is thus sorely afflicted, to give the old man who weeps at the feet of the departed new hope for the world to come,—and to receive that warm spirit which has just left the cold body into his realms of bliss.

What of roughness there was in his manner is softened by simplicity and truthfulness. The roughest lips may breathe the purest prayer. At the conclusion, 'Franconia and Daddy leave for Mrs. Rosebrook's villa, while Harry, remaining to watch over the remains, draws his chair to the stand, and reads by the murky light.

"I won't be long; take care of old mas'r," says Daddy, as he leaves the cell, solicitously looking back into the cavern-like place.

It is past ten when they reach the house of Mrs. Rosebrook, the inmates of which have retired, and are sleeping. Everything is quiet in and about the enclosure; the luxuriant foliage bespreading a lawn extending far away to the westward, seems refreshing itself with dew that sparkles beneath the starlight heavens, now arched like a crystal mist hung with diamond lights. The distant watch-dog's bark re-echoes faintly over the broad lagoon, to the

east; a cricket's chirrup sounds beneath the woodbine arbour; a moody guardsman, mounted on his lean steed, and armed to danger, paces his slow way along: he it is that breaks the stillness while guarding the fears of a watchful community, who know liberty, but crush with steel the love thereof.

A rap soon brings to the door the trim figure of a mulatto servant. He conveys the name of the visitor to his "missus," who, surprised at the untimely hour Franconia seeks her, loses no time in reaching the ante-room, into which she has been conducted.

Daddy has taken his seat in the hall, and recognises "missus" as she approaches; but as she puts out her hand to salute him, she recognises trouble seated on his countenance. "Young missus in da'h," he says, pointing to the ante-room while rubbing his eyes.

"But you must tell me what trouble has befallen you," she returns, as quickly, in her deshabille, she drops his hand and starts back.

"Missus know 'um all,—missus da'h." Again he points, and she hastens into the ante-room, when, grasping Franconia by the hand, she stares at her with breathless anxiety expressed in her face. A pause ensues, in which both seem bewildered. At length Franconia breaks the silence. "Uncle is gone!" she exclaims, following the words with a flow of tears.

"Gone!" reiterates the generous-hearted woman, encircling Franconia's neck with her left arm, and drawing her fondly to her bosom.

"Yes,—dead!" she continues, sobbing audibly. There is something touching in the words,—something which recalls the dearest associations of the past, and touches the

fountains of the heart. It is the soft tone in which they are uttered,—it gives new life to old images. So forcibly are they called up, that the good woman has no power to resist her surging emotions: gently she guides Franconia to the sofa, seats her upon its soft cushion, and attempts to console her wrecked spirit.

The man-servants are called up,—told to be prepared for orders. One of them recognises Daddy, and, inviting him into the pantry, would give him to eat. Trouble has wasted the old man's appetite; he thinks of master, but has no will to eat. No; he will see missus, and proceed back to the prison, there join Harry, and watch over all that is mortal of master. He thanks Abraham for what he gave him, declines the coat he would kindly lend him to keep out the chill, seeks the presence of his mistress (she has become more reconciled), says, "God bless 'um!" bids her good night, and sallies forth.

Mrs. Rosebrook listens to the recital of the melancholy scene with astonishment and awe. "How death grapples for us!" she exclaims, her soft, soul-bounding eyes glaring with surprise. "How it cuts its way with edge unseen. Be calm, be calm, Franconia; you have nobly done your part,—nobly! Whatever the pecuniary misfortunes,—whatever the secret cause of his downfall, you have played the woman to the very end. You have illustrated the purest of true affection; would it had repaid you better. Before daylight (negroes are, in consequence of their superstition, unwilling to remove the dead at midnight), I will have the body removed here,—buried from my house." The good woman did not disclose to Franconia that her husband was from home, making an effort to purchase Harry's wife and

children from their present owner. But she will do all she can,—the best can do no more.

At the gaol a different scene is presented. Harry, alone with the dead man, waits Daddy's return. Each tap of the bell awakes a new hope, soon to be disappointed. The clock strikes eleven: no Daddy returns. The gates are shut: Harry must wile away the night, in this tomb-like abode, with the dead. What stillness pervades the cell; how mournfully calm in death sleeps the departed! The watcher has read himself to sleep; his taper, like life on its way, has nearly shed out its pale light; the hot breath of summer breathes balmy through the lattice bars; mosquitoes sing their torturous tunes while seeking for the dead man's blood; lizards, with diamond eyes, crawl upon the wall, waiting their ration: but death, less inexorable than creditors, sits pale king over all. The palace and the cell are alike to him; the sharp edge of his unseen sword spares neither the king in his purple robe, nor the starving beggar who seeks a crust at his palace gate,—of all places the worst.

As morning dawns, and soft fleeting clouds tinge the heavens with light, four negroes may be seen sitting at the prison gate, a litter by their side, now and then casting silent glances upward, as if contemplating the sombre wall that frowns above their heads, enclosing the prison. The guard, armed to the death of disarming the true principles of republicanism, have passed and repassed them, challenged and received their answer, and as often examined their passes. They (the negroes) have come for a dead man. Guardmen get no fees of dead men,—the law has no more demands to serve: they wish the "boys" much joy with their booty, and pass on.

Six o'clock arrives; the first bell rings; locks, bolts, and bars clank in ungrateful medley; rumbling voices are heard within the hollow-sounding aisles; whispers from above chime ominously with the dull shuffle rumbling from below. "Seven more cases,—how it rages!" grumbles a monotonous voice, and the gate opens at the warden's touch. "Who's here?" he demands, with stern countenance unchanged, as he shrugs his formidable shoulders. "I see, (he continues, quickly), you have come for the dead debtor. Glad of it, my good fellow; this is the place to make dead men of debtors. Brought an order, I s'pose?" Saying "follow me," he turns about, hastens to the vestibule, receives the order from the hand of Duncan, the chief negro, reads it with grave attention, supposes it is all straight, and is about to show him the cell where the body lays, and which he is only too glad to release. "Hold a moment!" Mr. Winterflint (such is his name) says. Heaven knows he wants to get rid of the dead debtor; but the laws are so curious, creditors are so obdurate, and sheriffs have such a crooked way of doing straight things, that he is in the very bad position of not knowing what to do. Some document from the sheriff may be necessary; perhaps the creditors must agree to the compromise. He forgets that inexorable Death, as he is vulgarly styled, has forced a compromise: creditors must now credit "*by decease*." Upon this point, however, he must be satisfied by his superior. He now wishes Mr. Brien Moon would evince more exactness in holding inquests, and less anxiety for the fees. Mr. Winterflint depends not on his own decisions, where the laws relating to debtors are so absurdly mystical. "Rest here, boy," he says; "I won't be a

minute or two,—must do the thing straight.” He seeks the presence of that extremely high functionary, the gaoler (high indeed wherever slavery rules), who, having weighed the points with great legal impartiality, gives it as his most distinguished opinion that no order of release from the high sheriff is requisite to satisfy the creditors of his death: “take care of the order sent, and make a note of the niggers who take him away,” concludes that highly important gentleman, as comfortably his head reclines on soft pillow. To this end was Mr. Moon’s certificate essential.

Mr. Winterflint returns; enquires who owns the boys.

“Mas’r Rosebrook’s niggers,” Duncan replies, firmly; “but Missus send da order.”

“Sure of that, now? Good niggers them of Rosebrook’s: wouldn’t a’ gin it to nobody else’s niggers. Follow me—zist, zist!” he says, crooking his finger at the other three, and scowling, as Duncan relieves their timidity by advancing. They move slowly and noiselessly up the aisle, the humid atmosphere of which, pregnant with death, sickens as it steals into the very blood. “In there—zist! make no noise; the dead debtor lies there,” whispers the warden, laying his left hand upon Duncan’s shoulder, and, the forefinger of his right extended, pointing toward the last cell on the left. “Door’s open; not locked, I meant. Left it unsecured last night. Rap afore ye go in, though.” At the methodical warden’s bidding Duncan proceeds, his foot falling lightly on the floor. Reaching the door, he places his right hand on the swinging bolt, and for a few seconds seems listening. He hears the muddled sound of a footfall pacing the floor, and then a muttering as of voices in secret communion, or dying echoes from the tomb. He has not

mistaken the cell ; its crevices give forth odours stagnant of proof. Two successive raps bring Harry to the door : they are admitted to the presence of the dead. One by one Harry receives them by the hand, but he must needs be told why Daddy is not with them. They know not. He ate a morsel, and left late last night, says one of the negroes. Harry is astonished at this singular intelligence : Daddy Bob never before was known to commit an act of unfaithfulness ; he was true to Marston in life,—strange that he should desert him in death. “Mas’r’s death-bed wasn’t much at last,” says Duncan, as they gather round the cot, and, with curious faces, mingle their more curious remarks. Harry draws back the white handkerchief which Franconia had spread over the face of the corpse, as the negroes start back affrighted. As of nervous contortion, the ghastly face presents an awful picture. Swollen, discoloured, and contracted, no one outline of that once cheerful countenance can be traced. “Don’t look much like Mas’r Marston used to look ; times must a’ changed mightily since he used to look so happy at home,” mutters Duncan, shaking his head, and telling the others not to be “fear’d ; dead men can’t hurt nobody.”

“Died penniless ;—but e’ war good on e’ own plantation,” rejoins another. “One ting be sartin ’bout nigger—he know how he die wen ’e time cum ; Mas’r don know how ’e gwine to die !”

Having seen enough of the melancholy finale, they spread the litter in the aisle, as the warden enters the cell to facilitate the dead debtor’s exit. Harry again covers the face, and prepares to roll the body in a coverlet brought by Duncan. “I kind of liked him—he was so gentlemanly—has

been with us so long, and didn't seem like a prisoner. 'He was very quiet, and always civil when spoken to,' interposes the warden, as, assisting the second shrouding, he presses the hand of the corpse in his own.

Now he is ready ; they place his cold body on the litter : a few listless prisoners stand their sickly figures along the passage, watch him slowly borne to the iron gate in the arched vault. Death—less inexorable than creditors—has signed his release, thrown back prison bolts and bars, wrested him from the grasp of human laws, and now mocks at creditors, annuls *fi fas*, bids the dead debtor ake his exit. Death pays no good fees ; it makes that bequest to creditors ; but it reserves the keys of heaven for another purpose. "One ration less," says the warden, who, closing the grated door, casts a lingering look after the humble procession, bearing away the remains of our departed.

With Harry as the only follower, they proceed along, through suburban streets, and soon reach the house of that generous woman. A minister of the gospel awaits his coming ; the good man's words are consoling, but he cannot remodel the past for the advantage of the dead. Soon the body is placed in a "ready-made coffin," and the good man offers up the last funeral rites ; he can do no more than invoke the great protector to receive the departed into his bosom.

"How the troubles of this world rise up before me ! Oh ! uncle ! uncle ! how I could part with the world and bury my troubles in the same grave !" exclaims Franconia, as, the ceremony having ended, they bear the body away to its last resting-place ; and, in a paroxysm of grief, she shrieks and falls swooning to the floor.

In a neatly inclosed plat, a short distance from the Rose-

brook Villa, and near the bank of a meandering rivulet, overhung with mourning willows and clustering vines, they lay him to rest. The world gave the fallen man nothing but a prison-cell wherein to stretch his dying body; a woman gives him a sequestered grave, and nature spreads it with her loveliest offspring. It is the last resting-place of the Rosebrook family, which their negroes, partaking of that contentment so characteristic of the family, have planted with flowers they nurture with tenderest care. There is something touching in the calm beauty of the spot; something breathing of rural contentment. It is something to be buried in a pretty grave—to be mourned by a slave—to be loved by the untutored. How abject the slave, and yet how true his affection! how dear his requiem over a departed friend! “God bless master—receive his spirit!” is heard mingling with the music of the gentle breeze, as Harry, sitting at the head of the grave, looks upwards to heaven, while earth covers from sight the mortal relics of a once kind master.

It has been a day of sadness at the villa—a day of mourning and tribulation. How different the scene in the city! There, men whisper strange regrets. Sympathy is let loose, and is expanding itself to an unusual degree. Who was there that did not know Marston’s generous, gushing soul! Who was there that would not have stretched forth the helping hand, had they known his truly abject condition! Who that was not, and had not been twenty times, on the very brink of wresting him from the useless tyranny of his obdurate creditors! Who that had not waited from day to day, with purse-strings open, ready to pour forth the unmistakable tokens of friendship! How many were only restrained from doing good—from giving vent to the fountains

of their hospitality—through fear of being contaminated with that scandal rumour had thrown around his decline! Over his death hath sprung to life that curious fabric of living generosity, so ready to bespread a grave with unneeded bounties,—so emblematic of how many false mourners hath the dead. But Graspum would have all such expressions shrink beneath his glowing goodness. With honied words he tells the tale of his own honesty: his business intercourse with the deceased was in character most generous. Many a good turn did Marston receive at his hands; long had he been his faithful and unwearied friend. Fierce are the words with which he would execrate the tyrant creditors; yea, he would heap condign punishment on their obdurate heads. Time after time did he tell them the fallen man was penniless; how strange, then, that they tortured him to death within prison walls. He would sweep away such vengeance, bury it with his curses, and make obsolete such laws as give one man power to gratify his passion on another. His burning, surging anger can find no relief; nor can he reconcile such antiquated debtor laws: to him they are the very essence of barbarism, tainting that enlightened civilisation so long implanted by the State, so well maintained by the people. It is on those ennobling virtues of state, he says, the cherished doctrines of our democracy are founded. Graspum is, indeed, a well-developed type of our modern democracy, the flimsy fabric of which is well represented in the gasconade of the above outpouring philanthropy.

And now, as again the crimson clouds of evening soften into golden hues—as the sun, like a fiery chariot, sinks beneath the western landscape, and still night spreads her

shadowy mantle down the distant hills, and over the broad lagoon to the north—two sable figures may be seen, patting, sodding, and bespreading with fresh-plucked flowers the new grave. As the rippling brook gives out its silvery music, and earth seems drinking of the misty dew, that, like a bridal veil, spreads over its verdant hillocks, they whisper their requiem of regret, and mould the grave so carefully. “It’s mas’r’s last,” says one, smoothing the cone with his hands.

“We will plant the tree now,” returns the other, bringing forward a young clustering pine, which he places at the head of the grave, and on which he cuts the significant epitaph—“Good master lies here!”

Duncan and Harry have paid their last tribute. “He is at peace with this world,” says the latter, as, at the gate, he turns to take a last look over the paling.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HOW WE SHOULD ALL BE FORGIVING.

LET us forget the scenes of the foregoing chapters, and turn to something of pleasanter hue. In the meantime, let us freely acknowledge that we live in a land (our democratic south, we mean) where sumptuous living and, abject misery present their boldest outlines,—where the ignorance of the many is excused by the polished education of a very few,—where autoocracy sways its lash with bitterest absolutism,—where menial life lies prostrate at the feet of injustice, and despairingly appeals to heaven for succour,—where feasts and funerals rival each other.—and when pestilence, like a glutton, sends its victims to the graveyard most, the ball-room glitters brightest with its galaxy. Even here, where clamour cries aloud for popular government, men's souls are most crushed—not with legal right, but by popular will! And yet, from out all this incongruous substance, there seems a genial spirit working itself upon the surface, and making good its influence; and it is to that influence we should award the credit due. That genial spirit is the good master's protection; we would it were wider exercised for the good of all. But we must return to our narrative.

The Rosebrook Villa has assumed its usual cheerfulness; but while pestilence makes sad havoc among the inhabitants

of the city, gaiety is equally rampant. In a word, even the many funeral trains which pass along every day begin to wear a sort of cheerfulness, in consequence of which, it is rumoured, the aristocracy (we mean those who have money to spend) have made up their minds not to depart for the springs, yet awhile. As for Franconia, finding she could no longer endure M'Carstrow's dissolute habits, and having been told by that very distinguished gentleman, but unamiable husband, that he despised the whole tribe of her poor relations, she has retired to private boarding, where, with the five dollars a week, he, in the outpouring of his southern generosity, allows her, she subsists plainly but comfortably. It is, indeed, a paltry pittance, which the M'Carstrow family will excuse to the public with the greatness of their name.

Harry has returned to the plantation, where the people have smothered him in a new suit of black. Already has he preached three sermons in it, which said sermons are declared wonderful proofs of his biblical knowledge. Even Daddy Daniel, who expended fourteen picayunes in a new pair of spectacles, with which to hear the new parson more distinctly, pronounces the preaching prodigious. He is vehement in his exultation, lavishes his praise without stint; and as his black face glows with happiness, thanks missus for her great goodness in thus providing for their spiritual welfare. The Rosebrook "niggers" were always extremely respectable and well ordered in their moral condition; but now they seem invested with a new impulse for working out their own good; and by the advice of missus, whom every sable son and daughter loves most dearly, Daddy Daniel has arranged a system of evening prayer

meetings, which will be held in the little church, twice a week. And, too, there prevails a strong desire for an evening gathering now and then, at which the young shiners may be instructed how to grow. A curiously democratic law, however, offers a fierce impediment to this; and Daddy Daniel shakes his head, and aunt Peggy makes a belligerent muttering when told such gatherings cannot take place without endangering the state's rights. It is, nevertheless, decided that Kate, and Nan, and Dorothy, and Webster, and Clay, and such like young folks, may go to "settings up" and funerals, but strictly abstain from all fandangoes. Dad Daniel and his brother deacons cannot countenance such fiddling and dancing, such break-downs, and shoutings, and whirlings, and flouncing and frilling, and gay ribboning, as generally make up the evening's merriment at these fandangoes, so prevalent on neighbouring plantations about Christmas time. "Da don' mount to no good!" Daniel says, with a broad guffaw. "Nigger what spect t' git hi' way up in da world bes lef dem tings." And so one or two more screws are to be worked up for the better regulation of the machinery of the plantation. As for Master Rosebrook—why, he wouldn't sell a nigger for a world of money; and he doesn't care how much they learn; the more the better, provided they learn on the sly. They are all to be freed at a certain time, and although freedom is sweet, without learning they might make bad use of it. But master has had a noble object in view for some days past, and which, after encountering many difficulties, he has succeeded in carrying out to the great joy of all parties concerned.

One day, as the people were all busily engaged on the

plantation, Bradshaw's familiar figure presents itself at the house, and demands to see Harry. He has great good news, but don't want to tell him "noin" till he arrives at the Villa. "Ah, good man (Bradshaw's face beams good tidings, as he approaches Harry, and delivers a note) mas'r specs ye down da' wid no time loss." Bradshaw rubs his hands, and grins, and bows, his face seeming two shades blacker than ever, but no less cheerful.

"Master wants me to preach somewhere, next Sunday,—I know he does," says Harry, reading the note, which requests him to come immediately into the city. He will prepare to obey the summons, Dan and Sprat meanwhile taking good care of the horse and carriage, while Bradshaw makes a friendly visit to a few of the more distinguished cabins, and says "how de" to venerable aunties, who spread their best fare before him, and, with grave ceremony, invite him in to refresh before taking his return journey into the city; and Maum Betsy packs up six of her real smart made sweet cakes for the parson and Bradshaw to eat along the road. Betsy is in a strange state of bewilderment to know why master wants to take the new parson away just now, when he's so happy, and is only satisfied when assured that he will be safely returned to-morrow. A signal is made for Dad Daniel, who hastens to the cabin in time to see everything properly arranged for the parson's departure, and say: "God bless 'um,—good by!"

"Now, what can master want with me?" enquires Harry, as, on the road, they roll away towards the city.

Bradshaw cracks his whip, and with a significant smile looks Harry in the face, and returns: "Don' ax dis child

no mo' sich question. Old mas'r and me neber break secret. Tell ye dis, do'h! Old mas'r do good ting, sartin'."

"You know, but won't tell me, eh?" rejoins Harry, his manly face wearing a solicitous look. Bradshaw shakes his head, and adds a cunning wink in reply.

It is three o'clock when they arrive at the Villa, where, without reserve, missus extends her hand, and gives him a cordial welcome,—tells him Franconia has been waiting to see him with great patience, and has got a present for him. Franconia comes rushing into the hall, and is so glad to see him; but her countenance wears an air of sadness, which does not escape his notice—she is not the beautiful creature she was years ago, care has sadly wore upon those rounded features. But master is there, and he looks happy and cheerful; and there is something about the house servants, as they gather round him to have their say, which looks of suspiciously good omen. He cannot divine what it is; his first suspicions being aroused by missus saying Franconia had been waiting to see him.

"We must not call him Harry any longer—it doesn't become his profession: now that he is Elder of my plantation flock, he must, from this time, be called Elder!" says Rosebrook, touching him on the arm with the right hand. And the two ladies joined in, that it must be so. "Go into the parlour, ladies; I must say a word or two to the Elder," continued Rosebrook, taking Harry by the arm, and pacing through the hall into the conservatory at the back of the house. Here, after ordering Harry to be seated, he recounts his plan of emancipation, which, so far, has worked admirably, and, at the time proposed, will, without doubt or

danger, produce the hoped-for result. "You, my good man," he says, "can be a useful instrument in furthering my ends; I want you to be that instrument!" His negroes have all an interest in 'their labour, which interest is preserved for them in missus's savings-bank; and at a given time they are to have their freedom, but to remain on the plantation if they choose, at a stipulated rate of wages. Indeed, so strongly impressed with the good results of his proposed system is Rosebrook, that he long since scouted that contemptible fallacy, which must have had its origin in the very dregs of selfishness, that the two races can only live in proximity by one enslaving the other. Justice to each other, he holds, will solve the problem of their living together; but, between the oppressor and the oppressed, a vulcano that may at any day send forth its devouring flame, smoulders. Rosebrook, knows goodness always deserves its reward; and Harry assures him he never will violate the trust. Having said thus much, he rises from his chair, takes Harry by the arm, and leading him to the door of the conservatory, points him to a passage leading to the right, and says: "In there!—proceed into that passage, enter a door, first door on the left, and then you will find something you may consider your own."

Harry hesitated for a moment, watched master's countenance doubtingly, as if questioning the singular command.

"Fear not! nobody will hurt you," continues Rosebrook.

"Master never had a bad intention," thinks Harry; "I know he would not harm me; and then missus is so good. Slowly and nervously he proceeds, and on reaching the door hears a familiar "come in" answering his nervous

rap. The door opened into a neat little room, with carpet and chairs, a mahogany bureau and prints, all so neatly arranged, and wearing such an air of cleanliness. No sooner has he advanced beyond the threshold than the emaciated figure of a black sister vaults into his arms, crying, "Oh Harry! Harry! Harry!—my dear husband!" She throws her arms about his neck, and kisses, and kisses him, and buries her tears of joy in his bosom. How she pours out her soul's love!—how, in rapturous embraces, her black impulses give out the purest affection!

"And you!—you!—you!—my own dear Jane! Is it you? Has God commanded us to meet once more, to be happy once more, to live as heaven hath ordained us to live?" he returns, as fervently and affectionately he holds her in his arms, and returns her token of love. "Never! never! I forget you, never! By night and by day I have prayed the protecting hand of Providence to guide you through life's trials. How my heart has yearned to meet you in heaven! happy am I we have met once more on earth; yea, my soul leaps with joy. Forgive them, Father, forgive them who separate us on earth, for heaven makes the anointed!" And while they embrace thus fondly, their tears mingling with joy, children, recognising a returned father as he entered the door, are clinging at his feet beseechingly. He is their father;—how like children they love! "Sam, Sue, and Beckie, too!" he says, as one by one he takes them in his arms and kisses them. But there are two more, sombre and strange. He had caught the fourth in his arms, unconsciously. Ah, Jane!" he exclaims, turning toward her, his face filled with grief and chagrin, "they are not of me, Jane!" He still holds the little innocent by

the hand, as nervously he waits her reply. It is not guilt, but shame, with which she returns an answer.

"It was not my sin, Harry! It was him that forced me to live with another,—that lashed me when I refused, and, bleeding, made me obey the will," she returns, looking at him imploringly. Virtue is weaker than the lash; none feel it more than the slave. She loved Harry, she followed him with her thoughts; but it was the Christian that reduced her to the level of the brute. Laying her coloured hand upon his shoulder, she besought his forgiveness, as God was forgiving.

"Why should I not forgive thee, Jane? I would not chide thee, for no sin is on thy garments. Injustice gave master the right to sell thee, to make of thee what he pleased. Heaven made thy soul purest,—man thy body an outcast for the unrighteous to feast upon. How could I withhold forgiveness, Jane? I will be a father to them, a husband to thee; for such as thou hast been compelled to do is right, in the land we live in." So saying, he again embraces her, wipes the tears from her eyes, and comforts her. How sweet is forgiveness! It freshens like the dew of morning on the drooping plant; it strengthens the weary spirit, it steals into the desponding soul, and wakes to life new hopes of bliss,—to the slave it is sweet indeed!

"I will kiss them, too," he ejaculates, taking them in his arms with the embrace of a fond father,—which simple expression of love they return with prattling: They know not the trials of their parents; how blessed to know them not!

And now they gather the children around them, and seat themselves on a little settee near the window, where

Harry, overjoyed at meeting his dear ones once more, fondles them and listens to Jane, as with her left arm round his neck she discloses the sad tale of her tribulation. Let us beg the reader to excuse the recital, there is nothing fascinating in it, nor would we call forth the modest blushes of our generous south. A few words of the woman's story, however, we cannot omit; and we trust the forgiving will pardon their insertion. She tells Harry she was not separated from her children; but that Romescos, having well considered her worth, sold her with her "young uns" to the Rev. Peter ———, who had a small plantation down in Christ's Parish. The reverend gentleman, being born and educated to the degrading socialities of democratic states, always says he is not to blame for "using" the rights the law gives him; nor does he forget to express sundry regrets that he cannot see as preachers at the north see. As for money, he thinks preachers have just as good a right to get it as gentlemen of any other honourable profession. Now and then he preaches to niggers; and for telling them how they must live in the fear of the Lord, be obedient to their master, and pay for redemption by the sweat of their brows, he adds to his pile of coin. But he is strongly of the opinion that niggers are inferior "brutes" of the human species, and in furtherance of this opinion (so popular in the whole south) he expects them to live a week on a peck of corn. As for Jane (we must excuse the reverend gentleman, because of his faith in southern principles), he compelled her to live with the man Absalom ere she had been two days on his plantation, and by the same Absalom she had two children, which materially increased the cash value of the Reverend Peter ———'s slave property. Indeed, so well is the

reverend gentleman known for his foul play, that it has been thrown up to him in open court (by wicked planters who never had the fear of God before their eyes) that he more than half starved his niggers, and charged them toll for grinding their corn in his mill. Though the Reverend Peter ——— never failed to assure his friends and acquaintances of his generosity (a noble quality which had long been worthily maintained by the ancient family to which he belonged), the light of one generous act had never found its way to the public. In truth, so elastically did his reverend conscientiousness expand when he learned the strange motive which prompted Rosebrook to purchase Jane and her little ones, that he sorely regretted he had not put two hundred dollars more on the price of the lot. Fortunately Jane was much worn down by grief and toil, and was viewed by the reverend gentleman as a piece of property he would rather like to dispose of to the best advantage, lest she should suddenly make a void in his dollars and cents by sliding into some out of the way grave-yard. But Rosebrook, duly appreciating the unchristian qualities of our worthy one's generosity, kept his motive a profound secret until the negociation was completed. Now that it had become known that the Reverend Peter ——— (who dresses in blackest black, most sanctimoniously cut, whitest neckcloth wedded to his holy neck, and face so simply serious) assures Rosebrook he has got good people,—they are valuably promising—he will pray for them, that the future may prosper their wayfaring. He cannot, however, part with the good man without admonishing him how dangerous it is to give unto “niggers” the advantage of a superior position.

Reader, let us hope the clergy of the south will take heed lest by permitting their brethren to be sold and stolen in this manner they bring the profession into contempt. Let us hope the southern church will not much longer continue to bring pure Christianity into disgrace by serving ends so vile that heaven and earth frowns upon them ; for false is the voice raised in sanctimony to heaven for power to make a footstool of a fallen race !

CHAPTER XXXIX.

CONTAINING VARIOUS MATTERS.

GREAT regularity prevails on the Rosebrook plantation, and cheering are the prospects held out to those who toil thereon. Mrs. Rosebrook has dressed Jane (Harry's wife) in a nice new calico, which, with her feet encased in shining calf-skin shoes, and her head done up in a bandana, with spots of great brightness, shows her lean figure to good advantage. Like a good wife, happy with her own dear husband, she pours forth the emotions of a grateful heart, and feels that the world—not so bad after all—has something good in store for her. And then Harry looks even better than he did on Master Marston's plantation; and, with their little ones (sable types of their parents) dressed so neatly, they must be happy. And now that they are duly installed at the plantation, where Harry pursues his duties as father of the flock, and Jane lends her cheering voice and helping hand to make comfort in the various cabins complete (and with Dad Daniel's assurance that the people won't go astray), we must leave them for a time, and beg the reader's indulgence while following us through another phase of the children's history.

A slave is but a slave—an article subject to all the fluctuations of trade—a mere item in the scale of traffic, and eduved to serving the ends of avarice or licentiousness.

This is a consequence inseparable from his sale. It matters not whether the blood of the noblest patriot course in his veins, his hair be of flaxen brightness, his eyes of azure blue, his skin of Norman whiteness, and his features classic,—he can be no more than a slave, and as such must yield to the debasing influences of an institution that crushes and curses wherever it exists. In proof of this, we find the bright eyes of our little Annette, glowing with kindest love, failing to thaw the frozen souls of man-dealers. Nay, bright eyes only lend their aid to the law that debases her life. She has become valuable only as a finely and delicately developed woman, whose appearance in the market will produce sharp bidding, and a deal of dollars and cents. Graspum never lost an opportunity of trimming up these nice pieces of female property, making the money invested in them turn the longest premium, and satisfying his customers that, so far as dealing in the *brightest* kind of fancy stock was concerned, he is not a jot behind the most careful selector in the Charleston market. *Major John Bowling* (who is very distinguished, having descended from the very ancient family of that name, and is highly thought of by the aristocracy) has made the selection of such merchandise his particular branch of study for more than fourteen years. In consequence of the major's supposed taste, his pen was hitherto most frequented by gentlemen and connoisseurs; but now Graspum assures all respectable people, gentlemen of acknowledged taste, and young men who are cultivating their way up in the world, that his selections are second to none; of this he will produce sufficient proof, provided customers will make him a call and look into the area of his fold. The fold itself is most unin-

viting (it is, he assures us, owing to his determination to carry out the faith of his plain democracy) ; nevertheless, it contains the white, beautiful, and voluptuous,—all for sale. In fact—the truth must be told—Mr. Graspum assures the world that he firmly believes there is a sort of human nature extant (he is troubled sometimes to know just where the line breaks off), which never by any possibility could have been intended for any thing but the other to traffic in—to turn into the most dollars and cents. In proof of this principle he kept Annette until she had well nigh merged into womanhood, or until such time as she became a choice marketable article, with eyes worth so much ; nose, mouth, so much ; pretty auburn hair, worth so much ; and fine rounded figure (with all its fascinating appurtenances), worth so much ;—the whole amounting to so much ; to be sold for so much, the nice little profit being chalked down on the credit side of his formidable ledger ; in which stands recorded against his little soul (he knows will get to heaven) the sale of ten thousand black souls, which will shine in brightness when his is refused admittance to the portals above.

Having arrived at the point most marketable, he sells her to Mr. Gurdoin Choicewest, who pays no less a sum than sixteen hundred dollars in hard cash for the unyielding beauty (money advanced to him by his dear papa, who had no objection to his having a pretty coloured girl, provided Madam Choicewest—most indulgent mother she was, too—gave her consent ; and she said she was willing, provided—) : and now, notwithstanding she was his own, insisted on the preservation of her virtue, or death. Awful dilemma, this ! To lash her will be useless ; and the few kicks she has

already received have not yet begun to thaw her frozen determination. Such an unyielding thing is quite useless for the purpose young Gurdoin Choicewest purchased her. What must be done with her? The elder Choicewest is consulted, and gives it as his decided opinion that there is one of two things the younger Choicewest must do with this dear piece of property he has so unfortunately got on his hands,—he must sell her, or tie her up every day and pump her with cold water, say fifteen minutes at a time. Pumping niggers, the elder Mr. Choicewest remarks, with the coolness of an Austrian diplomatist, has a wondrous effect upon them; “it makes ‘em give in when nothing else will.” He once had four prime fellows, who, in stubbornness, seemed a match for Mr. Beelzebub himself. He lashed them, and he burned them, and he clipped their ears; and then he stretched them on planks, thinking they would cry “give in” afore the sockets of their joints were drawn out; but it was all to no purpose, they were as unyielding as granite.

About that time there was a celebrated manager of negroes keeping the prison. This clever functionary had a peculiar way of bringing the stubbornness out of them; so he consigned the four unending rascals to his skill. And this very valuable and very skilful gaol-keeper had a large window in his establishment, with iron bars running perpendicular; to the inside of which he would strap the four stubborn rascals, with their faces scientifically arranged between the bars, to prevent the moving of a muscle. Thus caged, their black heads bound to the grating, the scientific gaoler, who was something of a humourist withal, would enjoy a nice bit of fun at seeing the more favoured prisoners (with his

kind permission) exercise their dexterity in throwing peas at the faces of the bounden. How he would laugh—how the pea-punishing prisoners would enjoy it—how the fast bound niggers, foaming with rage and maddened to desperation, would bellow, as their very eyeballs darted fire and blood! What grand fun it was! bull-baiting sank into a mere shadow beside it. The former was measuredly passive, because the bull only roared, and pitched, and tossed; whereas here the sport was made more exhilarating by expressions of vengeance or implorings. And then, as a change of pastime, the skilful gaoler would demand a cessation of the pea hostilities; and enjoin the commencement of the water war; which said war was carried out by supplying about a dozen prisoners with as many buckets, which they would fill with great alacrity, and, in succession, throw the contents with great force over the unyielding, from the outside. The effect of this on naked men, bound with chains to iron bars, may be imagined; but the older Choicewest declares it was a cure. It brought steel out of the “rascals;” and made them as submissive as shoe-strings. Sometimes the jolly prisoners would make the bath so strong, that the niggers would seem completely drowned when released; but then they’d soon come to with a jolly good rolling, a little hartshorn applied to their nostrils, and the like of that. About a dozen times putting through the pea and water process cured them.

So says the very respectable Mr. Choicewest, with great dignity of manners, as he seriously advises the younger Choicewest to try a little quantity of the same sort on his now useless female purchase. Lady Choicewest must, however, be consulted on this point, as she is very particular about the mode in which all females about her establish-

ment are chastised. Indeed; Lady Choicewest is much concerned about the only male heir of the family, to whom she looks forward for very distinguished results to the family name. The family (Lady Choicewest always assures those whom she graciously condescends to admit into the fashionable precincts of her small but very select circle), descended from the very ancient and chivalric house of that name, whose celebrated estate was in Warwickshire, England; and, in proof of this, my Lady Choicewest invariably points to a sad daub, illustrative of some incomprehensible object, suspended over the antique mantelpiece. With methodical grace, and dignity which frowns with superlative contempt upon every thing very vulgar (for she says "she sublimely detests them very low creatures what are never brought up to manners at the north, and are worse than haystacks to learn civility"), my lady solicits a near inspection of this wonderful hieroglyphic, which she tells us is the family arms,—an ancient and choice bit of art she would not part with for the world. If her friends evince any want of perception in tracing the many deeds of valour it heralds, on behalf of the noble family of which she is an undisputed descendant, my lady will at once enter upon the task of instruction; and with the beautiful fore-finger of her right hand, always jewelled with great brilliancy, will she satisfactorily enlighten the stupid on the fame of the ancient Choicewest family, thereon inscribed. With no ordinary design on the credulity of her friends, Lady Choicewest has several times strongly intimated that she was not quite sure that one or two of her ancestors in the male line of the family were not reigning dukes as far down as the noble reign of the ignoble Oliver Cromwell! The question, nevertheless, is whether,

the honour of the ancient Choicewest family descended from Mr. or Mrs. Choicewest. The vulgar mass have been known to say (smilingly) that Lady Choicewest's name was Brown, the father of which very ancient family sold herrings and small pigs at a little stand in the market: this, however, was a very long time ago, and, as my lady is known to be troubled with an exceedingly crooked memory, persons better acquainted with her are more ready to accept the oblivious excuse.

Taking all these things into consideration, my Lady Choicewest is exceedingly cautious lest young Gourdoin Choicewest should do aught to dishonour the family name; and on this strange perplexity in which her much indulged son is placed being referred to her, she gives it as her most decided opinion that the wench, if as obstinate as described, had better be sold to the highest bidder—the sooner the better. My lady lays great emphasis on “the sooner the better.” That something will be lost she has not the slightest doubt; but then it were better to lose a little in the price of the stubborn wretch, than to have her always creating disturbance about the genteel premises. In furtherance of this (my lady's mandate), Annette is sold to Mr. Blackmore Blackett for the nice round sum of fifteen hundred dollars. Gourdoin Choicewest hates to part with the beauty, grieves and regrets,—she is so charmingly fascinating. “Must let her slide, though; critter won't do at all as I wants her to,” he lisps, regretting the serious loss of the dollars. His friend Blackmore Blackett, however, is a gentleman, and therefore he would not deceive him in the wench: hence he **makes** the reduction, because he finds her decidedly faulty. Had Blackmore Blackett been a regular flesh trader, he would

not have scrupled to take him in. As it is, gentlemen must always be gentlemen among themselves. Blackett, a gentleman of fortune, who lives at his ease in the city, and has the very finest taste for female beauty, was left, most unfortunately, a widower with four lovely daughters, any one of which may be considered a belle not to be rung by gentlemen of ordinary rank or vulgar pretension. In fact, the Blackett girls are considered very fine specimens of beauty, are much admired in society, and expect ere long, on the clear merit of polish, to rank equal with the first aristocracy of the place.

Mr. Blackmore Blackett esteems himself an extremely lucky fellow in having so advantageously procured such a nice piece of property,—so suited to his taste. Her price, when compared with her singularly valuable charms, is a mere nothing; and, too, all his fashionable friends will congratulate him upon his good fortune. But as disappointments will come, so Mr. Blackmore Blackett finds he has got something not quite so valuable as anticipated; however, being something of a philosopher, he will improve upon the course pursued by the younger Choicewest: he makes his first advances with great caution; whispers words of tenderness in her ear; tells her his happy jewel for life she must be. Remembering her mother, she turns a deaf ear to Mr. Blackett's pleadings. The very cabin which he has provided for her in the yard reminds her of that familiar domicile on Marston's plantation. Neither by soft pleadings, nor threatenings of sale to plantation life, nor terrors of the lash, can he soften the creature's sympathies, so that the flesh may succumb. When he whispered soft words and made fascinating promises, she would shake her head and move from him; when

he threatened, she would plead her abject position ; when he resorted to force, she would struggle with him, making the issue her virtue or death. Once she paid the penalty of her struggles with a broken wrist, which she shows us more in sorrow than anger. Annette is beautiful but delicate : has soft eyes beaming with the fulness of a great soul ; but they were sold, once,—now, sympathy for her is dead. The law gives her no protection for her virtue ; the ruffian may violate it, and Heaven only can shelter it with forgiveness. As for Blackett, he has no forgiveness in his temperament,—passion soars highest with him : he would slay with violent hands the minion who dared oppose its triumph.

About this time, Mr. Blackett, much to his surprise, finds a storm of mischief brewing about his domestic domain. The Miss Blacketts, dashing beauties, have had it come to their ears over and over again that all the young men about the city say Annette Mazatlan (as she is now called) is far more beautiful than any one of the Blacketts. This is quite enough to kindle the elements of a female war. In the south nothing can spread the war of jealousy and vanity with such undying rage as comparing slave beauty with that of the more favoured of the sexes. A firman of the strongest kind is now issued from the portfolio of the Miss Blacketts, forbidding the wretched girl entering the house ; and storms of abuse are plentifully and very cheaply lavished on her head, ere she puts it outside the cabin. She was a nasty, impudent hussy ; the very worst of all kind of creatures to have about a respectable mansion,—enough to shock respectable people ! The worst of it was, that the miserable white nigger thought she was handsome, and a lot of young, silly-headed men flattered her vanity by telling

the fool she was prettier than the Blacketts themselves,—so said the very accomplished Miss Blacketts. And if ever domicile was becoming too warm for man to live in, in consequence of female indignation, that one was Mr. Blackmore Blackett's. It was not so much that the father had purchased this beautiful creature to serve fiendish purposes. Oh no!—that was a thing of every-day occurrence,—something excusable in any respectable man's family. It was beauty rivalling, fierce and jealous of its compliments. Again, the wretch—found incorrigible, and useless for the purpose purchased—is sold. Poor, luckless maiden! she might add, as she passed through the hands of so many purchasers. This time, however, she is less valuable from having fractured her left wrist, deformity being always taken into account when such property is up at the flesh shambles. But Mr. Blackmore Blackett has a delicacy about putting her up under the hammer just now, inasmuch as he could not say she was sold for no fault; while the disfigured wrist might lead to suspicious remarks concerning his treatment of her. Another extremely unfortunate circumstance was its getting all about the city that she was a cold, soulless thing, who declared that sooner than yield to be the abject wretch men sought to make her, she would die that only death. She had but one life, and it were better to yield that up virtuously than die degraded. Graspum, then, is the only safe channel in which to dispose of the like. That functionary assures Mr. Blackmore Blackett that the girl is beautiful, delicate, and an exceedingly sweet creature yet! but that during the four months she has depreciated more than fifty per cent in value. His remarks may be considered out of place, but they are none the less true,

for it is ascertained, on private examination, that sundry stripes have been laid about her bare loins. Gurdoin (Choicewest declared to his mother that he never for once had laid violent hands on the obstinate wench; Mr. Blackmore Blackett stood ready to lay his hand on the Bible, and lift his eyes to heaven for proof of his innocence; but a record of the infliction, indelible of blood, remained there to tell its sad tale,—to shame, if shame had aught in slavery whereon to make itself known. Notwithstanding this bold denial, it is found that Mr. Blackmore Blackett did on two occasions strip her and secure her hands and feet to the bed-post, where he put on “about six at a time,” remarkably “gently.” He admired her symmetrical hips, her fine, white, soft, smooth skin—her voluptuous limbs, so beautifully and delicately developed; and then there was so much gushing sweetness, mingled with grief, in her face, as she cast her soft glances upon him, and implored him to end her existence, or save her such shame! Such, he says, laconically, completely disarmed him, and he only switched her a few times.

“She’s not worth a *dot* more than a thousand dollars I couldn’t give it for her, because I couldn’t make it out on her. The fact is, she’ll get a bad name by passing through so many hands—a deuced bad name!” says Graspum, whose commercial language is politically cold. “And then there’s her broken wrist—doubtful! doubtful! doubtful! what I can do with her. For a plantation she isn’t worth seven coppers, and sempstresses and housemaids of her kind are looked on suspiciously. It’s only with great nicety of skill ye can work such property to advantage,” he continues, viewing her in one of Mr. Blackmore Blackett’s ante-rooms.

The upshot of the matter is, that Mr. Blackmore Blackett accepts the offer, and Graspum, having again taken the damaged property under his charge, sends it back to his pen. As an offset for the broken wrist, she has three new dresses, two of which were presented by the younger Choicewest, and one by the generous Blackmore Blackett.

Poor Annette! she leaves for her home in the slave-pen, sad at heart, and in tears. "My mother! Oh, that I had a mother to love me, to say Annette so kindly,—to share with me my heart's bitter anguish. How I could love Nicholas, now that there is no mother to love me!" she mutters as she sobs, wending her way to that place of earthly torment. How different are the feelings of the oppressor. He drinks a social glass of wine with his friend Blackett, lights his cigar most fashionably, bids him a polite good morning, and intimates that a cheque for the amount of the purchase will be ready any time he may be pleased to call. And now he wends his way homeward, little imagining what good fortune awaits him at the pen to which he has despatched his purchase.

Annette has reached the pen, in which she sits, pensively, holding her bonnet by the strings, the heavy folds of her light auburn hair hanging dishevelled over her shoulders. Melancholy indeed she is, for she hath passed an ordeal of unholy brutality. Near her sits one Pringle Blowers, a man of coarse habits, who resides on his rice-plantation, a few miles from the city, into which he frequently comes, much to the annoyance of quietly disposed citizens and guardsmen, who are not unfrequently called upon to preserve the peace he threatens to disturb. Dearly does he love his legitimate brandy, and dearly does it make him pay for the insane

frolics it incites him to perpetrate, to the profit of certain saloons, and danger of persons. Madman under the influence of his favourite drink, a strange pride besets his faculties, which is 'only appeased with the demolition of glass and men's faces. For this strange amusement he has become famous and feared; and as the light of his own besotted countenance makes its appearance, citizens generally are not inclined to interpose any obstacle to the exercise of his belligerent propensities.

Here he sits, viewing Annette with excited scrutiny. Never before has he seen anything so pretty, so bright, so fascinating—all clothed with a halo of modesty—for sale in the market. The nigger is completely absorbed in the beauty, he mutters to himself: and yet she must be a nigger or she would not be here. That she is an article of sale, then, there can be no doubt. "Van, yer the nicest gal I've seen! Reckon how Grasp. paid a tall shot for ye, eh?" he says, in the exuberance of his fascinated soul. He will draw nearer to her, toss her undulating hair, playfully, and with seeming unconsciousness draw his brawny hand across her bosom. "Didn't mean it!" he exclaims, contorting his broad red face, as she puts out her hand, presses him from her, and disdains his second attempt. "Pluck, I reckon! needn't put on mouths, though, when a feller's only quizzin." He shrugs his great round shoulders, and rolls his wicked eyes.

"I am not for you, man!" she interrupts: "I would scorn you, were I not enslaved," she continues, a curl of contempt on her lip, as her very soul kindles with grief. Rising quickly from his side she walked across the pen, and seated herself on the opposite side. Here she casts a frowning

look upon him, as if loathing his very presence. This, Mr. Pringle Blowers don't altogether like : slaves have no right to look loathingly on white people. His flushed face glows red with excitement ; he runs his brawny fingers through the tufted mats of short curly hair that stand almost erect on his head, draws his capacious jaws into a singular angle, and makes a hideous grimace.

The terrified girl has no answer to make ; she is a forlorn outcast of democracy's rule. He takes the black ribbon from round his neck, bares his bosom more broadly than before, throws the plaid sack in which he is dressed from off him, and leaping as it were across the room, seizes her in his arms. "Kisses are cheap, I reckon, and a feller what don't have enough on 'em 's a fool," he ejaculates, as with a desperate struggle she bounds from his grasp, seizes the knife from a negro's hand as she passes him, and is about to plunge the shining steel into her breast. "Oh, mother, mother!—what have I done?—is not God my Saviour?—has he forsaken me?—left me a prey to those who seek my life?"

"I settle those things," said a voice in the rear, and immediately a hand grasped her arm, and the knife fell carelessly upon the floor. It was Graspum ; the sudden surprise overcame her ; she sank back in his arms, and swooned. "She swoons,—how limber, how lifeless she seems !" says Graspum, as with great coolness he calls a negro attendant, orders him to remove her to the grass plat, and bathe her well with cold water. "A good dowsing of water is the cure for fainting niggers," he concludes.

The black man takes her in his arms, and with great kind-

ness, lays her on the plat, bathes her temples, loosens her dress, and with his rough hand manipulates her arms. How soft and silky they seem to his touch! "Him hard to slave ye, miss," he says, laying his hand upon her temples, gently, as with commiseration he looks intently on her pallid features.

"Now, Blowers," says Graspum, as soon as they are by themselves, "what in the name of the Gentiles have you been up to?"

"Wal—can't say its nothin, a'cos that wouldn't do. But, ye see, the critter made my mouth water so; there was no standin on't! And I wanted to be civil, and she wouldn't,—and I went t' fumlin with her hair what looked so inviting, as there was no resistin on't, and she looked just as sassy as sixty; and to stun the whole, when I only wanted to kiss them ar' temptin lips the fool was goin to kill herself. It wasn't how I cared two buttons about it; but then the feelin just came over me at the time," he answers, shaking his huge sides, giving Graspum a significant wink, and laughing heartily.

"Never at a loss, I see!" returns the other, nodding his head, pertinently: "If I didn't know ye, Blowers, that might go down without sticking."

"Ye don't tell where ye raised that critter, eh?" he interrupts, inquisitively, pointing his thumb over his right shoulder, and crooking his finger, comically.

"Raised her with shiners—lots on 'em!" he rejoins, pushing Mr. Pringle Blowers in the stomach, playfully, with his forefinger.

"Graspum! yer a wicked 'un."

"Suit ye, kind 'a—eh, Blowers?" he rejoins, enquiringly, maintaining great gravity of manner as he watches each change of Blowers' countenance.

Blowers laughs in reply. His laugh has something sardonic in it, seeming more vicious as he opens his great wicked mouth, and displays an ugly row of coloured teeth.

"Sit down, Blowers, sit down!" says Graspum, motioning his hand, with a studied politeness. The two gentlemen take seats side by side, on a wooden bench, stretched across the centre of the pen, for negroes to sit upon. "As I live, Blowers, thar ain't another individual like you in the county. You can whip a file of common guardsmen, put the Mayor's court through a course of affronts, frighten all the females out of the fashionable houses, treat a regiment of volunteers, drink a bar-room dry——"

"Compliments thick, long and strong," interposes Blowers, winking and wiping his mouth. "Can elect half the members of the assembly!" he concludes.

"True! nevertheless," rejoins Graspum, "a great man cannot be flattered—compliments are his by merit! And the city knows you're a man of exquisite taste."

Blowers interrupts with a loud laugh, as he suggests the propriety of seeing the "gal get round again."

"Not so fast, Blowers; not so fast!" Graspum ejaculates, as Blowers is about to rise from his seat and follow Annette.

"Well, now!" returns Blowers, remaining seated, "Might just as well come square to the mark,—ye want to sell me that wench?"

"Truth's truth!" he replies. "Blowers is the man who's got the gold to do it."

"Name yer price; and no rounding the corners!" exclaims Blowers, his countenance quickening with animation. He takes Graspum by the arm with his left hand, turns him half round, and waits for a reply.

Seeing it's Blowers, (the keen business man replies, in an off-hand manner), who's a trump in his way, and don't care for a few dollars, he'll take seventeen hundred for her, tin down; not a fraction less! He will have no bantering, inasmuch as his friends all know that he has but one price for niggers, from which it is no use to seek a discount. Mr. Blowers, generally a good judge of such articles, would like one more view at it before fully making up his mind. Graspum calls "Oh, boy!" and the negro making his appearance, says: "Dat gal 'em all right agin; went mos asleep, but am right as parched pea now."

"Have her coming," he returns, facing Blowers. "Nothing the matter with that gal," he exclaims, touching his elbow. It is merely one of her flimsy fits; she hasn't quite come to maturity."

Slowly the negro leads her, weeping (Graspum says they *will* cry—it's natural!) into the presence of the far-famed and much-feared Mr. Pringle Blowers. Her hair hangs carelessly about her neck and shoulders, the open incision of her dress discloses a neatly worked stomacher; how sweetly glows the melancholy that broods over her countenance! "I'll take her—I'll take her!" exclaims Blowers, in spasmodic ecstasy.

"I know'd you would; I'll suit you to a charm," rejoins

the man of trade, laconically, as the negro steps a few feet backward, and watches the process. "Considers it a trade," is the reply of Blowers, as he orders his waggon to be brought to the door.

"Oh! master, master! save me—save me! and let me die in peace. Don't, good master, don't sell me again!" Thus saying she falls on her knees at Graspum's feet, and with hands uplifted beseeches him to save her from the hands of a man whose very sight she loathes. She reads the man's character in his face; she knows too well the hellish purpose for which he buys her. Bitter, bitter, are the tears of anguish she sheds at his feet, deep and piercing are her bemoanings. Again her soft, sorrowing eyes wander in prayer to heaven: as Graspum is a husband, a brother, and a father,—whose children are yet in the world's travel of uncertainty, she beseeches him to save her from that man.

"Don't be mad, girl," he says, pushing her hand from him.

"Frightened, eh? Make ye love me, yet! Why, gal, ye never had such a master in the world as I'll be to ye. I lay I makes a lady on ye, and lets ye have it all yer own way, afore a fortnight," he rejoins, spreading his brawny arms over her, as she, in an attitude of fright, vaults from beneath them, and, uttering a faint cry, glides crouching into a corner of the pen. There is no protection for her now; her weepings and implorings fall harmless on the slave-dealer's ears: heaven will protect her when earth knows her no more!

"There's two can play a game like that, gal!" exclaims Blowers. "Rough play like that don't do with this ere citizen. Can just take the vixen out on a dozen on ye as

what don't know what's good for 'em." Blowers is evidently allowing his temper to get the better of him. He stands a few feet from her, makes grim his florid face, gesticulates his hands, and daringly advances toward her as the negro announces the arrival of his waggon.

"You must go with him, girl; stop working yourself into a fever; stop it, I say," interposes Graspum, peremptorily.

The waggon! the waggon! the waggon! to carry me away, away;—never, never to return and see my mother?" she exclaims, as well nigh in convulsions she shrieks, when Blowers grasps her in his arms (Graspum saying, be gentle, Blowers), drags her to the door, and by force thrusts her into the waggon, stifling her cries as on the road they drive quickly away. As the last faint wail dies away, and the vehicle bearing its victim disappears in the distance, we think how sweet is liberty, how prone to injustice is man, how crushing of right are democracy's base practices.

"Does seem kind of hard; but it's a righteous good sale. Shouldn't wonder if she played the same game on him she did with t'other two fools. Get her back then, and sell her over again. Well! come now; there's no great loss without—some—small—gain!" says Graspum, as, standing his prominent figure in the door of his man pen, he watches the woman pass out of sight, thrusts his hands deep into his breeches pockets, and commences humming an air for his own special amusement.

CHAPTER XL.

NICHOLAS'S SIMPLE STORY.

THE reader will remember that we left Nicholas seeking his way to Mr. Grabguy's workshop, situated in the outskirts of the city. And we must here inform him that considerable change in the social position of the younger Grabguy family has taken place since we left them, which is some years ago. The elder Grabguy, who, it will be remembered, was very distinguished as his Worship the Mayor of the City (that also was some years ago), has departed this life, leaving the present principal of the Grabguy family a large portion of his estate, which, being mostly of "nigger property," requires some little transforming before it can be made to suit his more extended business arrangements. This material addition to the already well-reputed estate of Mr. Grabguy warrants his admittance into very respectable, and, some say, rather distinguished society. Indeed, it is more than whispered, that when the question of admitting Mr. and Mrs. Grabguy to the membership of a very select circle, the saintly cognomen of which is as indefinable as its system of selecting members, or the angles presented by the nasal organs of a few ladies when anything short of the very first families are proposed, there were seven very fashionable ladies for, and only three against. The greatest antagonist the Grabguys have to getting into the embrace of this very select circle is Mrs. Chief Justice Pimpkins, a matronly body of some fifty summers, who declares there can

be no judge in the world so clever as her own dear Pimpkins, and that society was becoming so vulgar and coarse, and so many low people—whose English was as hopefully bad as could be, and who never spoke when they didn't impugn her risible nerves—were intruding themselves upon its polished sanctity, that she felt more and more every day the necessity of withdrawing entirely from it, and enjoying her own exclusively distinguished self. In the case of Grabguy's admittance to the St. Cecilia, my Lady Pimpkins—she is commonly called Lady Chief Justice Pimpkins—had two most formidable black balls; the first because Mrs. Grabguy's father was a bread-baker, and the second that the present Grabguy could not be considered a gentleman while he continued in mechanical business. Another serious objection Mrs. Pimpkins would merely suggest as a preventive;—such people were ill suited to mix with titled and other distinguished society! But, Grabguy, to make up for the vexatious rejection, has got to be an alderman, which is a step upward in the scale of his father's attained distinction. There is nothing more natural, then, than that Grabguy should seek his way up in the world, with the best means at his hands; it is a worthy trait of human nature, and 's as natural to the slave. In this instance (when master and slave are both incited to a noble purpose) Grabguy is a wealthy alderman, and Nicholas—(the whiter of the two)—his abject slave. The master, a man of meagre mind, and exceedingly avaricious, would make himself distinguished in society; the slave, a mercurial being of impassioned temper, whose mind is quickened by a sense of the injustice that robs him of his rights, seeks only freedom and what may follow in its order.

Let us again introduce the reader to Nicholas, as his manly figure, marked with impressive features, stands before us, in Grabguy's workshop. Tall, and finely formed, he has grown to manhood, retaining all the quick fiery impulses of his race. Those black eyes wandering irresistibly, that curl of contempt that sits upon his lip, that stare of revenge that scowls beneath those heavy eyebrows, and that hate of wrong that ever and anon pervades the whole, tell how burns in his heart the elements of a will that would brave death for its rights—that would bear unmoved the oppressor's lash—that would embrace death rather than yield to perfidy. He tells us—"I came here, sold—so they said—by God's will. Well, I thought to myself, isn't this strange, that a curious God (they tell me he loves everybody) should sell me? It all seemed like a misty waste to me. I remembered home—I learned to read, myself—I remembered mother, I loved her, but she left me, and I have never seen her since. I loved her, dear mother! I did love her; but they said she was gone far away, and I musn't mind if I never see'd her again. It seemed hard and strange, but I had to put up with it, for they said I never had a father, and my mother had no right to me (his piercing black eyes glare, as fervently he says, *mother!*). I thought, at last, it was true, for everybody had a right to call me nigger,—a blasted white nigger, a nigger as wouldn't be worth nothing. And then they used to kick me, and cuff me, and lash me; and if nigger was nigger I was worse than a nigger, because every black nigger was laughing at me, and telling me what a fool of a white nigger I was;—that white niggers was nobody, could be nobody, and was never intended for nobody, as nobody knew where white niggers come from. But I didn't believe

all this; it warn't sensible. Something said—Nicholas! you're just as good as anybody: learn to read, write, and cypher, and you'll be something yet. And this something—I couldn't tell 'what it was, nor could I describe it—seemed irresistible in its power to carry me to be that somebody it prompted in my feelings. I was white, and when I looked at myself I knew I wasn't a nigger; and feeling that everybody could be somebody, I began to look forward to the time when I should rise above the burden of misfortune that seemed bearing me down into the earth. And then, Franconia, like a sister, used to come to me, and say so many kind things to me that I felt relieved, and resolved to go forward. Then I lost sight of Franconia, and saw nobody I knew but Annette; and she seemed so pretty, and loved me so affectionately. How long it seems since I have seen her! She dressed me so nicely, and parted my hair, and kissed me so kindly; and said good-by, when I left her, so in regret, I never can forget it. And it was then they said I was sold. Mr. Graspum said he owned me, and owning me was equal to doing what he pleased with me. Then I went home to Mr. Grabguy's; and they said Mr. Grabguy owned me just as he owned his great big dog they called a democratic bull-dog, the foreman said he paid a democratic ten-dollar gold piece for. They used to say the only difference between me and the dog was, that the dog could go where he pleased without being lashed, and I couldn't. And the dog always got enough to eat, and seemed a great favourite with everybody, whereas I got only more kicks than cucumbers, didn't seem liked by anybody, and if I got enough to eat I had nobody to thank but good old Margery, the cook, who was kind to me now and

then, and used to say—"I like you, Nicholas!" And that used to make me feel so happy! Old Margery was coal-black: but I didn't care for that,—the knowledge of somebody loving you is enough to light up the happy of life, and make the heart feel contented. In this manner my thoughts went here and there and everywhere; and the truth is, I had so many thoughts, that I got completely bewildered in thinking how I was to better myself, and be like other folks. Mr. Grabguy seemed kind to me at first,—said he would make a great mechanic of me, and give me a chance to buy myself. I didn't know what this "buy myself" meant, at first. But I soon found out (he tells us he must speak with caution) that I must pay so many hundred dollars afore I could be like other folks. The kindness Mr. Grabguy at first exhibited for me didn't last long; he soon began to kick me, and cuff me, and swear at me. And it 'pear'd to me as if I never could please anybody, and so my feelings got so embittered I didn't know what to do. I was put into the shop among the men, and one said Nigger, here! and another said, Nigger, get there!—and they all seemed not to be inclined to help me along. And then I would get in a passion: but that never made things better. The foreman now and then said a kind word to me; and whenever he did, it made my heart feel so good that I seemed a new being with brighter hopes. Well, Mr. Grabguy put me to turning the grindstone, first; and from turning the grindstone—the men used to throw water in my face when they ground their chisels, and their plain irons, and axes and adzes—I was learned to saw, and to plain boards, and then to mortice and frame, and make mouldings, and window-sashes, and door-frames. When I could do all these, master,

used to say I was bound to make a great workman, and, laughingly, would say I was the most valuable property he ever owned. About this time I began to find out how it was that the other white folks owned themselves and master owned me; but then, if I said anything about it, master might tie me up and lash me as he used to do; and so I remained quiet, but kept up a thinking. By and by I got perfect at the carpenter's trade, and I learned engineering; and when I had got engineering perfect, I took a fancy for making stucco work and images. And people said I learned wondrously fast, and was the best workman far or near. Seeing these things, people used to be coming to me, and talking to me about my value, and then end by wanting me to make them specimens of stucco. I seemed liked by everybody who came to see me, and good people had a kind word for me; but Mr. Grabguy was very strict, and wouldn't allow me to do anything without his permission. People said my work was perfect, and master said I was a perfect piece of property; and it used to pain deep into my heart when master spoke so. Well! I got to be a man, and when the foreman got drunk master used to put me in his place. And after a while I got to be foreman altogether: but I was a slave, they said, and men wouldn't follow my directions when master was away; they all acknowledged that I was a good workman, but said a nigger never should be allowed to direct and order white people. That made my very blood boil, as I grew older, because I was whiter than many of them. However, submit was the word; and I bore up and trusted to heaven for deliverance, hoping the day would come soon when its will would be carried out. With my knowledge of mechanics increased a love of learning,

which almost amounted to a passion. They said it was against the law for a nigger to read; but I was raised so far above black niggers that I didn't mind what the law said: so I got 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and the Bible, and 'Young's Night Thoughts,' and from them I learned great truths: they gave me new hopes, refreshed my weary soul, and made me like a new-clothed being ready to soar above the injustice of this life. Oh, how I read them at night, and re-read them in the morning, and every time found something new in them, something that suited my case! Through the sentiments imbibed from them I saw freedom hanging out its light of love, fascinating me, and inciting me to make a death struggle to gain it.

"One day, as I was thinking of my hard fate, and how I did all the work and master got all the money for it—and how I had to live and how he lived, master came in—looking good-natured. He approached me, shook hands with me, said I was worth my weight in gold; and then asked me how I would like to be free. I told him I would jump for joy, would sing praises, and be glad all the day long.

" 'Aint you contented where you are, Nicholas?' he enquired. I told him I didn't dislike him; but freedom was sweetest. 'Give me a chance of my freedom, master, and yet you may know me as a man,' says I, feeling that to be free was to be among the living; to be a slave was to be among the moving dead. To this he said, he always had liked me, was proud of me, had unbounded confidence in my directions over the men, and always felt safe when he went from home leaving things in my charge. 'In this view of the case, Nicholas,' he says, 'I have come to the conclusion,—and it's Mrs. Grabguy's conclusion, too,—to

let you work evenings, on overtime, for yourself. You can earn a deal of money that way, if you please ; just save it up, and let me keep it for you, and in consideration of your faithfulness I will set you free whenever you get a thousand dollars to put into my hands. Now that's generous—I want to do the straight thing, and so Mrs. Grabguy wants to do the straight thing ; and what money you save you can put in Mrs. Grabguy's hands for safe keeping. She's a noble-minded woman, and 'll take good care of it.' This was to me like entering upon a new life of hope and joy. How my heart yearned for the coming day, when I should be free like other folks ! I worked and struggled by night and day ; and good Mr. Simons befriended me, and procured me many little orders, which I executed, and for which I got good pay. All my own earnings I put into Mrs. Grabguy's hands ; and she told me she would keep it for me, safe, till I got enough to buy my freedom. My confidence in these assurances was undivided. I looked upon Mrs. Grabguy as a friend and mother ; and good Mr. Simons, who was poor but honest, did many kind things to help me out. When I got one hundred dollars in missus' hands I jumped for joy ; with it I seemed to have got over the first difficult step in the great mountain. Then missus said I must take Jerushe for my wife. I didn't like Jerushe at first—she was almost black ; but missus said we were both slaves ; hence, that could be no objection. As missus's order was equally as positive as master's, there was no alternative but to obey it, and Jerushe became my wife. We were lawfully married, and missus made a nice little party for us, and Jerushe loved me, and was kind to me, and her solicitude for my welfare

soon made me repay her love. I pitied her condition, and she seemed to pity mine; and I soon forgot that she was black, and we lived happily together, and had two children, which missus said were hers. It was hard to reconcile this, and yet it was so, by law as well as social right. But then missus was kind to Jerushe, and let her buy her time at four dollars a week, which, having learned to make dresses, she could pay and have a small surplus to lay by every week. Jerushe knew I was struggling for freedom, and she would help me to buy that freedom, knowing that, if I was free, I would return her kindness, and struggle to make her free, and our children free.

"Years rolled on,—we had placed nearly five hundred dollars in missus's hands: but how vain were the hopes that had borne us through so many privations for the accumulation of this portion of our price of freedom! Master has sold my children,—yes, sold them! He will not tell me where nor to whom. Missus will neither see nor hear me; and master threatens to sell me to New Orleans if I resent his act. To what tribunal can I appeal for justice? Shut from the laws of my native land, what justice is there for the slave where injustice makes its law oppression? Master may sell me, but he cannot vanquish the spirit God has given me; never, never, will I yield to his nefarious designs. I have but one life to yield up a sacrifice for right—I care not to live for wrong!" Thus he speaks, as his frenzied soul burns with indignation. His soul's love was freedom; he asked but justice to achieve it. Sick at heart he has thrown up that zeal for his master's welfare which bore him onward, summoned his determination to resist to the last—to die rather than again confront

the dreary waste of a slave's life. Grabguy has forfeited the amount deposited by Nicholas as part of the price of his freedom,—betrayed his confidence.

He tells us his simple story, as the workmen, with fear on their countenances, move heedlessly about the room. As he concludes, Grabguy, with sullen countenance, enters the great door at the end of the building; he is followed by three men in official garbs, two of whom bear manacles in their hands. Nicholas's dark eye flashes upon them, and with an instinctive knowledge of their errand, he seizes a broad axe, salutes them, and, defiantly, cautions their advance. Grabguy heeds not; and as the aggrieved man slowly retreats backward to protect himself with the wall, still keeping his eye set on Grabguy, two negroes make a sudden spring upon him from behind, fetter his arms as the officers rush forward, bind him hand and foot, drag him to the door, crying for mercy: they bind him to a dray, and drive through the streets to the slave pen of Graspum. We hear his pleading voice, as his ruffian captors, their prey secure, disappear among the busy crowd.

CHAPTER XLI.

HE WOULD DELIVER HER FROM BONDAGE.

ABOUT twelve o'clock of a hazy night, in the month of November, and while Annette, in the hands of Mr. Pringle Blowers, with death-like tenacity refuses to yield to his vile purposes, a little taunt-rigged schooner may be seen stealing her way through the grey mist into Charleston inner harbour. Like a mysterious messenger, she advances noiselessly, gibes her half-dimmed sails, rounds to a short distance from an old fort that stands on a ridge of flats extending into the sea, drops her anchor, and furls her sails. We hear the rumble of the chain, and "aye, aye!" sound on the still air, like the murmur of voices in the clouds. A pause is followed by the sharp sound of voices echoing through the hollow mist; then she rides like a thing of life reposing on the polished water, her masts half obscured in mist, looming high above, like a spectre in gauze shroud. The sound dies away, and dimly we see the figure of a man pacing the deck from fore-shroud to taffrail. Now and then he stops at the wheel, casts sundry glances about the horizon, as if to catch a recognition of some point of land near by, and walks again. Now he places his body against the spokes, leans forward, and compares the "lay" of the land with points of compass. He will reach his hand into the binnacle, to note the compass with his finger, and wait its traversing motion. Apparently satisfied, he moves his slow way along again, now

folding his arms as if in deep study, then locking his hands behind him, and drooping his head. He paces and paces for an hour, retires below, and all is still.

Early on the following morning, a man of middle stature, genteelly dressed, may be seen leaving the craft in a boat, which, rowed by two seamen, soon reaches a wharf, upon the landing slip of which he disembarks. He looks pale, and his countenance wears a placidness indicating a mind absorbed in reflection. With a carpet-bag in his right hand does he ascend the steps to the crown of the wharf, as the boat returns to the mysterious-looking craft. Standing on the capsill for a few minutes, his blue eyes wander over the scene, as if to detect some familiar object. The warehouses along the wharf's wear a dingy, neglected air; immense piles of cotton bales stand under slender sheds erected here and there along the line of buildings which form a curvature declining to the east and west. Again, open spaces are strewn with bales of cotton waiting its turn through the press (a large building near by, from which steam is issuing in successive puffings and roarings); from which compressed bales emerge out of the lower story, followed by a dozen half-naked negroes, who, half-bent, trundle it onward into piles, or on board-ships. Far above these is spread out a semicircle of dwellings, having a gloomy and irregular appearance, devoid of that freshness and brightness which so distinguishes the New England city. The bustle of the day is just commencing, and the half-mantled ships, lying unmoved at the wharfs, give out signs of activity. The new comer is about to move on up the wharf, when suddenly he is accosted by a negro, who, in ragged garb, touches his hat politely, and says, with a smile, "Yer sarvant, mas'r!"

"Your name, my boy?" returns the man, in a kind tone of voice. The negro, thrusting his hands deep into the pockets of his old sack coat, seems contemplating an answer. He has had several names, both surname and Christian; names are but of little value to a slave. "Pompe they once called me, but da' calls me Bill now," he answers, eyeing the stranger, suspiciously. "Pompe, Pompe! I've heard that name: how familiar it sounds!" the stranger says to himself.

"One mas'r call me Turtle Tom," rejoins the negro, scratching his head the while.

"Turtle Tom!" reiterates the stranger. "Had you no other name coupled with Pompe, when that was the name by which you were recognised?"

The negro will not wait his finishing the sentence. He says he had good old mas'r's name; but good old mas'r—"so dey tells"—dead and gone long time ago. "His name was Marston; and dat war dis child's name den, God bless 'um!" he answers the stranger.

"Marston, who lived on the banks of the Ashley?" again he enquires, as his face crimson with excitement.

"Dat war my mas'r; and dem war good old times when I lived dar," returns the negro, significantly nodding his head.

"Then you are the first man I have met, the first I want to see," exclaimed the stranger, grasping the negro by the hand, and, much to his surprise, shaking it heartily.

"Taint Lorenzo," returns the negro, contemplating the stranger with astonishment.

The stranger is not Lorenzo, but he has heard much of him. What happy recollections its familiar sound recalls:

how it strengthens his hopes of success in his mission. The negro tells him he is a labourer on the wharf, and cannot leave to conduct him to an hotel; he will, however, direct the stranger to a comfortable abode in Church Street. It is quiet and unostentatious, but will serve his purpose. Placing a piece of money in the negro's hand, he assures him that he is his friend—has much need of his services—will pay him well for their employment. He has equally aroused the negro's curiosity; and, were it nothing more than satisfying that, he would be faithful to his promise to call the same night at seven o'clock. Precisely at that hour the negro will fulfil his engagement. The stranger wends his way to Church Street, and up a narrow alley, on the left hand side, finds comfortable apartments, as directed. Here he makes his toilet, and sallies out to reconnoitre the city. Meanwhile the little craft is entered at the custom-house as a fruiter, bound from New Providence to New York, and put in for a harbour. There is something suspicious about a fruiter putting in for a harbour at this season, and many curious glances are cast upon the little captain as he bows to the truth of his entry before the deputy collector.

The stranger has spent the day in viewing the city, and at nightfall, the negro, true to his engagement, presents his sable figure at his lodgings. A servant having shown him up stairs, he is ushered into his presence, where, seeming bewildered, he looks about inquiringly, as if doubting the object for which he has been summoned. Abjectly he holds his tattered cap in his hand, and tremblingly inquires what master wants with him.

"Have confidence, my good fellow," the stranger speaks, with a smile; "my mission is love and peace." He

places a chair beside a small table in the centre of the room ; bids the negro sit down, which he does with some hesitation. The room is small ; it contains a table, bureau, washstand, bed, and four chairs, which, together with a few small prints hanging from the dingy walls, and a square piece of carpet in the centre of the room, constitute its furniture. " You know Marston's plantation—know it as it was when Marston resided thereon, do you ?" enquires the stranger, seating himself beside the negro, who evidently is not used to this sort of familiarity.

" Know 'um well, dat I does," answers the negro, quickly, as if the question had recalled scenes of the past.

" And you know the people, too, I suppose ?"

" Da'h people !" ejaculates the negro, with a rhapsody of enthusiasm ; " reckon I does."

" Will you recount them."

The negro, commencing with old master, recounts the names of Miss Franconia, Clotilda, Ellen, Aunt Rachel, old Daddy Bob, and Harry.

" It is enough," says the stranger, " they are all familiar names."

" Did you know my good old master ?" interrupts the negro, suddenly, as if detecting some familiar feature in the stranger's countenance.

" No," he replies, measuredly ; " but his name has sounded in my ears a thousand times. Tell me where are the children, Annette and Nicholas ? and where may I find Franconia ?"

The negro shakes his head, and remains silent for a few minutes. At length he raises his hand, and in a half-whisper says, " Gone, gone, gone ; sold and scattered, good mas'r.

Habn't see dem child dis many a day: reckon da'h done gone down south." He hesitates suddenly, as if calling something to memory; and then, placing his left hand on the stranger's right arm, as he rubs his left across his forehead, stammers out—"Mas'r, mas'r, I reckon dis child do know somefin 'bout Miss Frankone. Anyhow, mas'r (ye knows I'se nigger do'h, and don't keep up 'quaintance a'ter mas'r sell um), can put ye straight 'bout Missus Rosebrook's house, and reckon how dat lady can put ye straight on Miss Frankone's where'bout." It is what the stranger wants. He has heard of Mrs. Rosebrook before; she will give him the information he seeks: so, turning again to the negro, he tells him that, for a few days at least, he shall require his presence at the same hour in the evening: to-night he must conduct him to Mrs. Rosebrook's sequestered villa.

The watch-tower bell of the guard-house sounds forth nine o'clock. The soldier-like sentinel, pacing with loaded musket, and armed with sharpest steel, cries out in hoarse accents, "All's well!" The bell is summoning all negroes to their habitations: our guide, Bill, informs the stranger that he must have a "pass" from a white man before he can venture into the street. "Mas'r may write 'um," he says, knowing that it matters but little from whom it comes, so long as the writer be a white man. The pass is written; the negro partakes of refreshment that has been prepared for him at the stranger's request, and they are wending their way through the city. They pass between rows of massive buildings, many of which have an antique appearance, and bear strong signs of neglect; but their unique style of architecture denotes the taste of the time in which they were erected.

Some are distinguished by heavy stone colonnades, others by verandas of fret-work, with large gothic windows standing in bold outline. Gloomy-looking guard-houses, from which numerous armed men are issuing forth for the night's duty,—patrolling figures with white cross belts, and armed with batons, standing at corners of streets, or moving along with heavy tread on the uneven side-walk,—give the city an air of military importance. The love of freedom is dangerous in this democratic world; liberty is simply a privilege. Again the stranger and his guide (the negro) emerge into narrow lanes, and pass along between rows of small dwellings inhabited by negroes; but at every turn they encounter mounted soldiery, riding two abreast, heavily armed. “Democracy, boast not of thy privileges: tell no man thou governest with equal justice!” said the stranger to himself, as the gas-light shed its flickers upon this military array formed to suppress liberty of thought.

They have reached the outskirts of the city, and are approaching a pretty villa, which the negro, who has been explaining the nature and duties of this formidable display of citizen soldiery, points to as the peaceful home of the Rosebrook family. Brighter and brighter, as they approach, glares the bright light of a window in the north front. “I wish Mas’r Rosebrook owned me,” says the negro, stopping at the garden gate, and viewing the pretty enclosure ere he opens it. “If ebery mas’r and missus war as kind as da’h is, dar wouldn’t be no need a’ dem guard-houses and dem guardmen wid dar savage steel,” he continues, opening the gate gently, and motioning the stranger to walk in. Noiselessly he advances up the brick walk to the hall entrance, and rings the bell. A well-dressed negro man soon makes

his appearance, receives him politely, as the guide retires, and ushers him into a sumptuously furnished parlour. The Rosebrook negroes quickly recognise a gentleman, and detecting it in the bearing of the stranger they treat him as such. Mrs. Rosebrook, followed by her husband, soon makes her appearance, saluting the stranger with her usual suavity. "I have come, madam," he says, "on a strange mission. With you I make no secret of it; should I be successful it will remove the grief and anxiety of one who has for years mourned the fate of her on whom all her affections seem to have centred. If you will but read this it will save the further recital of my mission." Thus saying, he drew a letter from his pocket, presented it, and watched her countenance as line by line she read it, and, with tears glistening in her eyes, passed it to her husband.

"I am, good sir, heartily glad your mission is thus laudable. Be at home, and while you are in the city let our home be yours. Franconia is here with us to-night; the child you search after is also with us, and it was but to-day we learned the cruelties to which she has been subjected during the last few years. Indeed, her fate had been kept concealed from us until a few weeks ago, and to-day, having escaped the brutal designs of a ruffian, she fled to us for protection, and is now concealed under our roof——"

"Yes, poor wretch—it is too true!" rejoins Rosebrook. "But something must be done as quickly as possible, for if Pringle Blowers regains her she will be subjected to tortures her frame is too delicate to bear up under. There must be no time lost, not a day!" he says, as Mrs. Rosebrook quickly leaves the room to convey the news to Franconia, who, with Annette, is in an adjoining apartment.

Like a hunted deer, Annette's fears were excited on hearing the stranger enter; Franconia is endeavouring to quiet them. The poor slave fears the ruffian's pursuit, trembles at each foot-fall upon the door-sill, and piteously turns to her old friend for protection. Blowers, maddened with disappointment, would rather sacrifice her to infamy than sell her for money to a good master. The price of a pretty slave is no object with this boasting democrat,—the gratification of his carnal desires soars supreme. Rosebrook knows this, as the abject woman does to her sorrow.

As Rosebrook and the stranger sit conversing upon the object of his mission, and the best way to effect it, this good woman returns leading by the arm a delicately-formed girl, whose blonde countenance is shadowed with an air of melancholy which rather adds to her charms than detracts from her beauty. The stranger's eye rests upon her,—quickly he recognises Clotilda's features, Clotilda's form, and gentleness; but she is fairer than Clotilda, has blue eyes, and almost golden hair. She hesitates as her eyes meet the stranger's. "Do not fear, my child," speaks Franconia, whose slender figure follows her into the room. Assured that the stranger is her friend, she is introduced to him, and modestly takes her seat on a chair by the window. The stranger's name is Maxwell, and on hearing it announced Franconia anticipated the pleasure of meeting with her old friend, through whose agency she effected Clotilda's escape. Advancing towards him with extended hand, she looks enquiringly in his face, saying, "Am I mistaken?" She shakes her head, doubtingly. "No! it is not my friend Maxwell," she continues.

"No!" rejoins the stranger; "he is my cousin: by

his directions I have come here. I have brought a letter from his wife Clotilda, whose dear deliverer you were; and whose thoughts now daily recur to you, to your love and kindness to her; with undying brightness." "Ah!" interrupts Franconia, welcoming him with a fervent heart, "I knew Clotilda would never forget Annette; I knew she would remember me; I knew her ardent soul would give forth its measure of gratitude. Happy am I that you have come—though years have rolled by since I gave up all hopes of the joyous consummation—to relieve this sorrowing child," she says, running to Annette, and with tears of joy in her eyes, exclaiming, "My child! my child! you'll yet be saved. The ruffian who tortured you to-day will torture you no more—no more!" And she kisses the sorrowing girl's cheek, as tears of sympathy gush into her eyes.

Rosebrook handed Franconia the letter, which she read as her face brightened with joy. "Good Clotilda! how happy she must be! How generous, how kind, how true dear Maxwell was to her; and they are living together so comfortably, and have such a nice family growing up; but she wants her slave child! A slave mother never forgets her slave offspring!" she exclaims, with enthusiastic delight, as she reads and re-reads the letter. Back she paces to Annette, lays her right arm gently over her shoulder, and pats her cheek with her left hand: "Annette will see her mother, yet. There is an all-protecting hand guiding us through every ill of life. Be of good cheer, my child; never despond while there is a hope left; bury the horrors of the past in the brighter prospect of the future." And leading her to the table she seats her by her side and reads the

letter aloud, as with joy the forlorn girl's feelings bound forth. We need scarcely tell the reader that Clotilda's letter was read in listening silence, and ran thus :—

“ Nassau, New Providence,

“ October 24, 18—.

“ My Dear Franconia,

“ My thoughts have never ceased to recur to you, nor to my dear Annette. You were a mother and a deliverer to me ; I know (though I have not received a word in reply to any of my letters) you have been a mother to my child. As you know, I dare not write as much as I would, lest this letter fall into the hands of those whose interest it is to perpetuate our enslavement. I hope you are happy with a good husband, as I am. Years have rolled by since we parted, and many have been the scenes and changes through which I have passed, but they were all pleasant changes, each for brighter and happier prospects. I was married to him who, with you, effected my escape, a few weeks after landing at Harbour Island. Since then we have resided in Nassau, where my husband, who loves me dearly, pursues an extensive and lucrative business, and we both move in the best society of the place. We have a pretty family of three children, the oldest nine years old, and the youngest five. How my heart would leap with joy if I thought you would accept an invitation to come and see me, to spend a few weeks with me, and see yourself how comfortable and happy a slave may be ! Perhaps I should not say happy, for I never can be truly happy without my Annette. Something haunts my mind whenever I recur to

her,—which is every day. And then I have written so many letters to which no answers have been returned; but, a whispering angel, as if to console me, says, Franconia will be her mother, and you will yet see her.

“The gentleman who bears this letter is my husband’s cousin. He has all my husband’s generosity of character, and will seek you for the purpose of finding Annette, and bearing her safely to me. He has proffered his services, and sworn to carry out his object; and being on his way to New York for the purpose of entering into business with his uncle now in that city, will touch at Charleston for the object herein stated. Further his object, my dear Franconia, and that heaven will reward the hand that in mercy helps the enslaved,

“Is the prayer of your grateful

“CLOTILDA MAXWELL.”

“I knew mother would never forget me; I knew she would come back to me, would be kind to me, as she used to be, and save me from such cruelty as I have suffered. Several times have I resolved on putting an end to my unhappy existence, but as often did something say to me, ‘live hoping—there is a better day coming.’ God guides, governs, and raises up the weary soul,” says Annette, in touching accents, as Franconia finished reading the letter.

While this conversation is progressing, and the plan of getting Annette out of the city being devised, a nice supper, at Mrs. Rosebrook’s request, is being prepared in the adjoining room. To this the stranger is invited, and all sit down in a happy circle. Franconia seems invested with

new life ; Annette forgets for the time her troubles ; Mrs. Rosebrook, who does the honours of the table, wishes every ill-used slave could find means of escaping into freedom ; and Deacon Rosebrook says he will join heart and hand in getting the forlorn girl free from her base purchaser.

CHAPTER XLII.

OTHER PHASES OF DEMOCRACY'S RULE.

WE must leave to the reader's imagination much that transpired at the Rosebrook Villa during the night above mentioned, and ask him to accompany us on the following morning, when curious placards may be seen posted here and there at corners of streets and other conspicuous places about the city. Mr. Pringle Blowers has lost a beautiful female slave, whose fair hair, beautiful complexion, deep blue eyes, delicate features, and charming promise, is in large type and blackest printer's ink set forth most glowingly. Had Mr. Pringle Blowers been a poet instead of a chivalric rice-planter, he might have emblazoned his loss in sentimental rhyme. But Pringle Blowers says poets always make fools of themselves; and, although the south is a sweet and sunny land, he is happy indeed that it is troubled with none of the miscreants. He owned niggers innumerable; but they were only common stock, all of whom he could have lost without feeling any more than ordinary disappointment at the loss of their worth in money. For this one, however, he had a kind of undefined love, which moved his heart most indescribably. Disappointed in the gratification of his desires, he is mortified and maddened to desperation. Why should a slave he had invested so much money in, and felt so like making a lady of, and never would have thought of setting at field labour, run away? He only

wanted her for the most aristocratic purpose the south can provide for a beautiful slave. Hence Mr. Pringle Blowers, through the medium of his knowledge of letters, puts forward his placard—(a copy of which he inserts in all the most respectable morning journals)—in which the fair outlines of his lost woman are simply set forth. He will give three hundred dollars for her apprehension, fifty dollars more for proof to convict any person of harbouring her, and an additional sum for lodging her in any gaol in the country. This large reward Mr. Pringle Blowers will pay in hard cash; and he has no doubt the offering will be quite enough to excite the hunting propensities of fashionable young gentlemen, as well as inveterate negro hunters. Beside this, negro hunting being rather a democratic sport than otherwise, Mr. Pringle Blowers reconciles his feelings with the fact of these sports being uncommonly successful.

The reader will naturally conclude that the offer of this large reward produced some sensation in and about the city. People stopped along the streets, read the curious hand-bill, smiled, and made various remarks. Ladies, always curious to know what is prominent among the current events of the day, sent servants to ascertain what so attractive the posters contained. It was, indeed, a regular bit of self-enjoyed fun for them; for the ladies had all heard of Pringle Blowers, and that a female slave for whose capture he would give three hundred dollars had run away from him they were heartily glad to learn.

The day-police were equally happy to hear of the loss, and anxious to make the capture. In this position it was doubly necessary to be cautious in proceeding to effect the escape

of the fair girl. If discovered in the act the stranger might be subjected to a series of imprisonments that would sacrifice his life. Again, he might be assassinated by some disguised hand; or, if an infuriated mob were let loose upon him, no police interference could save his life. As suspicion is ever on the point of giving out its dangerous caprices where a community live fearing one another, so the stranger became sensible of the shafts of suspicion that might at any moment be darted at him. Despatching his schooner on her voyage, he continued for several days walking about the city, as if indifferent to what was passing. He read the curious poster in which was offered the goodly reward for the apprehension of a lost slave, affected great coolness, and even ignorance of the mode by which such articles were recovered.

Fortunate was it for the stranger that he despatched the schooner without the prize he intended to carry off, for no sooner had she got under way and begun to move down the harbour, than she was boarded by four men, who, producing their authority, searched her from stem to stern. Such were their suspicions, that they would not be satisfied until they had opened a few boxes and bales that were stowed away in the hold. This done, the schooner was permitted to continue her voyage, and the stranger, unmolested, continues his walks about the city. A few days pass and the excitement has calmed down. Pringle Blowers, although chagrined at the loss of his valuable piece of woman property, resolves to wait the issue with patience and forbearance. If she, fool like, has made away with herself, he cannot bring her to life; if she be carried off by villainous kidnappers, they must eventually suffer the consequences. Her beauty

will expose their plots. He will absorb his usual requirement of spirit, keep the nerve up, and never despond of regaining her while his reward of three hundred dollars stands before a money-loving public. He would rather have lost two dozen common niggers than this one he set so much by, intended to make so much of, and upon whom he had set his very heart, soul, and burning passions. But there is no profit in grief, no use in giving way to disappointment. Philosophers bear disappointments with fortitude; he must be a philosopher, keep a sharp look out, and not despair.

How different is the scene presented at Rosebrook's Villa! There, Annette is seen, prepared to take her departure. Dressed in male attire, with frock coat and trousers setting so neatly, dress boots, white vest, and brightly arranged shirt-bosom, she is the type of perfection of a youthful southern. Franconia has expended her skill in completing the fair girl's toilet, when Mrs. Rosebrook places a pair of green spectacles over her eyes, bids her look in the glass, and tells her she will pass for a planter's son among a million.

"Nobody will know me, now," she answers, viewing herself in the mirror. Her neat setting suit, Panama hat, and green spectacles, give a peculiar air to her lithe figure. And though her emotions are well nigh ready to give forth tears, she cannot suppress a smile at the singular transformation of her person.

"It'll take sharper eyes than policemen's to discover the disguise," says Rosebrook, who, having ordered a carriage to the door, enters the room and takes her kindly by the hand. "Keep up a good heart; don't despond, my child,

and the chances are that you'll be safe—you'll be in Wilmington to-morrow morning," he continues: then, turning to Franconia, who will accompany her to that place, he awaits her pleasure. "I am ready!" returns that generous woman, as, arrayed in her travelling dress, she takes Annette by the hand, and is about to proceed to the gate where the carriage waits. Mrs. Rosebrook must take one more fond parting. Laying her right arm over her shoulder, and pressing her to her bosom, she kisses and kisses her fair cheek, bids her remember that God alone is her protector, her guide to a happy future. In freedom may she live to freedom's God; in slavery, hope ever, and trust in his mercy! With this admonition, the excited girl, trembling, leaves the Villa, leaning on Franconia's arm. Bradshaw has the carriage at the door, piled with sundry boxes and portmanteaus, giving it the appearance of a gentleman's travelling equipage. He has orders to drive to the steam-boat landing, where the young invalid planter will embark for New York *via* Wilmington and the land route. Soon they have taken their seats, and with Rosebrook's good-natured face shining beside Bradshaw, on the front seat, they say their happy adieu! and bound over the road for the steamer.

It is now within fifteen minutes of the starting time. The wharf presents a bustling scene: carriages and coaches are arriving with eager-looking passengers, who, fearing they are a little behind time, stare about as if bewildered, scold heedless drivers, point out their baggage to awkward porters who run to and fro with trunks and boxes on their heads, and then nervously seek the ticket-office, where they procure the piece of paper that insures them through to New York. Albeit, finding they have quite time enough on their

hands, they escort their female voyagers on board, and loiter about in the way of every one else, enjoying that excitement in others which they have fortunately passed through. Here and there about the wharf, leaning their heads carelessly over black piles, are sly-looking policemen, who scan every voyager with a searching eye. They are *incog.*, but the initiated recognise them at a glance. The restless leer of that lynx eye discovers their object; anything, from a runaway nigger to a houseless debtor, is to them acceptable prey. Atween decks of the steamer, secured at the end of the wharf, another scene of bustle and confusion presents itself. A passenger is not quite sure his baggage is all on board, and must needs waste his breath in oaths at the dumb porter, who works at his utmost strength, under the direction of Mr. Mate, whose important figure is poised on the wharf. Another wants to "lay over" at Richmond, and is using most abusive language to a mulatto waiter, who has put his trunk on one side of the boat and carpet bag on the other. A third, a fussy old lady with two rosy-faced daughters she is, against her southern principles, seeing to the north to be educated, is making a piteous lamentation over the remains of two bonnets—just from the hands of the milliner—hopelessly smashed in her bandbox. The careless porter set it on a pile of baggage, from where it tottled over under the feet of an astonished gentleman, who endeavours to soothe the good lady's feelings with courteous apologies. On the upper deck, heeding no one, but now and then affecting to read a newspaper, as passengers pace to and fro, is the stranger, seated on one of the side seats. The engineer moves his valve now and then, the cross-head ascends, the steam hisses below, the condenser rumbles,

the steam from the funnel roars furiously forth, spreading its scalding vapour through the air. Again, the man, scarcely perceptible, touches the iron rod with his finger, the magic monster again moves its piston downward, the wheels make a turn, the massive vessel surges upon her lines, as if eager to press forward on her course. Another gentle touch, and, obeying the summons, the iron monster is still: the man subjects the monster with his little finger. He has stopped her near the centre, where, with a slight touch, he can turn back or forward. Again, he lifts a small key, and the steam, with a deafening roar, issues from the escape: he is venting his chest. Simultaneously the second bell sounds forth its clanking medley: two minutes more, and the snake-like craft will be buffeting the waves, on her daily errand. As passengers begin to muster on board, their friends clustering round the capsill of the wharf, obstructing the way, the sturdy figure of Mr. Pringle Blowers may be seen behind a spile near the capsill, his sharp, peering eyes scanning the ship from fore to aft. He is not sure she will get off by this route; common sense tells him that, but there exists a prompting something underneath common sense telling him it's money saved to keep a sharp look-out. And this he does merely to gratify that inert something, knowing at the same time that, having no money, no person will supply her, and she must be concealed in the swamps, where only "niggers" will relieve her necessities. At this moment Rosebrook's carriage may be seen driving to the ticket office at the head of the wharf, where Rosebrook, with great coolness, gets out, steps within the railing, and procures the tickets in his own name. Again taking his seat, the mate, who stands on

the capsill of the wharf, now and then casting a glance up, cries out, "Another carriage coming!" Bradshaw cracks his whip, and the horses dash down the wharf, scatter the people who have gathered to see the boat off, as a dozen black porters, at the mate's command, rush round the carriage, seize the baggage, and hurry it on board. Rosebrook, fearing his friends will lose their passage, begs people to clear the gangway, and almost runs on board, his fugitive charge clinging to his arms. The captain stands at the gangway, and recognising the late comer, makes one of his blandest bows: he will send a steward to show them a good state-room. "Keep close till the boat leaves, and remember there is a world before you," Rosebrook says, shaking Annette by the hand, as she returns, "God bless good master!" They are safe in the state-room: he kisses Franconia's cheek, shuts the door, and, hurrying back, regains the wharf just as the last bell strikes, and the gangway is being carried on board.

"Nor going along with us, eh?" ejaculates the captain, as, from the capsill, Rosebrook looks round to bid him good-by.

"Not to-day (he returns, laconically). Take good care of my friends; the young invalid from Louisiana in particular." Just then he catches the stranger's eye, and, with a significant motion of his fingers, says, "All safe!" With a nod of recognition the stranger makes his adieu; the fastenings are cast away, the faint tinkle of a bell is heard amid the roar of steam; the man at the valves touches the throttle bar; up mounts the piston rod—down it surges again; the revolving wheels rustle the water; the

huge craft moves backward easy, and then ahead; a clanking noise denotes the connections are "hooked on," and onward she bounds over the sea. How leaps with joy that heart yearning for freedom, as the words "She's away!" gladden Annette's very soul! Her enraptured feelings gush forth in prayer to her deliverers; it is as a new spring of life, infusing its refreshing waters into desert sands. She seems a new being, with hope, joy, and happiness brightening the future for her. But, alas! how vain are hopes,—how uncertain the future!

Rosebrook watched the steaming craft as she crosses the bar, and dwindles out of sight. "Thou art safe, poor slave," he says to himself, as she passes from view behind the distant peak.

Something touches him on the shoulder as he returns to his carriage. "Ah! this you, Pringle Blowers?" he exclaims, turning round suddenly, as the full face of that important personage presented itself. "Been seeing some friends off to ——?"

"No," replies Blowers, with seeming indifference. He is just shying round,—keeping an eye out for a smart kind of "a gal," lost last week.

"Quite a misfortune, that, Blowers! God bless me, I'm sorry," returns Rosebrook, dryly. Rosebrook invites him to get in and ride a short distance. Blowers has not the slightest objection; seats his square frame on the left side of the carriage. "Those were clever posters you put out for the apprehension of that girl, Blowers!"

"Took some genius, I reckon," interrupts Blowers, with broad laugh.

“They say she was very handsome, and, if it be true, I hope you may get her, Blowers,” continues Rosebrook, naïvely.

The disappointed man shakes his head, touches the other on the arm, and says, “Nothing is more sure !”

CHAPTER XLIII.

HOW DADDY BOB DEPARTED.

LET us again beg the reader's indulgence, while we go back to the night when Marston was found dead in his cell, and when that old negro, whose eventful history we shall here close, sat by his bed-side, unconscious that the spirit of master had winged its way to another world. Bob, faithful unto death, remained his lone watcher. Disguising his ownership, he has toiled from day to day that the fruits thereof might relieve master's necessities; and he had shared them with the flowing goodness of a simple heart. In a malarious cell, how happy was he to make his bed on the cold plank beside his master's cot, where he might watch over his declining spirit. Kindness was his by nature,—no cruel law could rob his heart of its treasure: he would follow master to the grave, and lavish it upon the soil that covered him.

Having accompanied Francouia to the Rosebrook Villa, he will return to the prison and join Harry, alone watching over the dead. The city clock strikes the hour of eleven as he leaves the outer gate, and turns into the broad road leading to the city. The scene before him is vamped in still darkness: a murky light now and then sheds its glimmers across the broad road; and as he hurries onward, contemplating the sad spectacle presented in the prison, happy incidents of

old plantation life mingle their associations with his thoughts. He muscs to himself, and then, as if bewildered, commences humming his favourite tune—"There's a place for old mas'r yet, when all 'um dead and gone!" His soul is free from suspicion: he fears not the savage guardsman's coming; the pure kindliness of his heart is his shield. How often has he scanned this same scene,—paced this same road on his master's errands! How death has changed the circumstances of this his nightly errand! Far away to the east, on his left, the broad landscape seems black and ominous; before him, the sleeping city spreads its panorama, broken and sombre, beneath heavy clouds; the fretted towers on the massive prison frown dimly through the mist to the right, from which a low marshy expanse dwindles into the dark horizon. And ever and anon the forked lightning courses its way through the heavens, now tinging the sombre scene with mellow light, then closing it in deeper darkness.

Onward the old man wends his way. If he be shut out from the prison, he will find shelter at Jane's cabin near by, from whence he may reach the cell early next morning. Presently the dull tramp of horses breaks upon his ear,—the sound sharpening as they advance. Through the dimming haze he sees two mounted guardsmen advancing: the murmuring sound of their conversation floats onward through the air,—their side-arms rattle ominously. Now their white cross belts are disclosed; their stalwart figures loom out. Nearer and nearer they approach: as the old man, trembling with fear, remembers he is without a pass, a gruff voice cries out, "Stop there!"

"A prowling nigger!" rejoins another, in a voice scarcely

less hoarse. The old man halts in the light of a lamp, as the right-hand guard rides up, and demands his *pass*.

"Whose nigger are you?" again demands the first voice. "Your pass, or come with us!"

The old man has no *pass*; he will go to his master, dead in the county prison!

Guardsmen will hear neither falsehoods nor pleading. He doesn't know "whose nigger he is! he is a runaway without home or master," says the left-hand guardsman, as he draws his baton from beneath his coat, and with savage grimace makes a threatening gesture. Again he poises it over the old man's head, as he, with hand uplifted, supplicates mercy. "Nobody's nigger, and without a *pass*!" he grumbles out, still motioning his baton.

"He says his master is in gaol; that's enough! Stop, now, no more such nonsense!" rejoins the other, as the old man is about to explain. "Not another word." He is good prey, made and provided by the sovereign law of the state. Placing him between their horses, they conduct him in silence forward to the guard-house. He is a harmless captive, in a world where democracy with babbling tongue boasts of equal justice. "A prowler!" exclaims one of the guardsmen, as, dismounting in front of the massive building, with frowning façade of stone, they disappear, leading the old man within its great doors, as the glaring gas-light reflects upon his withered features.

"Found prowling on the neck, sir!" says the right hand guardsman, addressing himself to the captain, a portly-looking man in a military suit, who, with affected importance, casts a look of suspicion at the old man. "Have seen you before, I think?" he enquires.

"Reckon so, mas'r; but neber in dis place," replies Bob, in half-subdued accents.

"You are nobody's nigger, give a false account of yourself, and have no home, I hear," interrupts the captain, at the same time ordering a clerkly-looking individual who sits at a desk near an iron railing enclosing a tribune, to make the entry in his book.

"Your name?" demands the clerk.

"Bob!"

"Without owner, or home?"

"My master's cell was my home."

"That won't do, my man!" interrupts the portly-looking captain. "Mr. Clerk (directing himself to that functionary) you must enter him—nobody's nigger, without home or master." And as such he is entered upon that high record of a sovereign state—the guard-house calendar. If this record were carried before the just tribunal of heaven, how foul of crime, injustice, and wrong, would its pages be found! The faithful old man has laboured under an assumed ownership. His badge, procured for him through the intercession of Franconia, shows him as the property of Mr. Henry Frazer. That gentleman is many hundred miles away: the old man, ignorant of the barbarous intricacy of the law, feels it to his sorrow. The production of the badge, and the statement, though asserting that Miss Franconia is his friend, show a discrepancy. His statement has no truth for guardsmen; his poor frame is yet worth something, but his oath has no value in law: hence he must march into a cold cell, and there remain till morning.

Before that high functionary, the mayor—whose judgments the Russian Czar might blush to acknowledge, or

affirm,—he is arraigned at ten o'clock on the following morning. He has plenty of accusers,—no one to plead the justice of his case. A plain story he would tell, did the law and his honour grant the boon. The fatal badge shows him the property of Mr. Henry Frazer: Mr. Henry Frazer is nowhere to be found, and the statement that master was in prison tends to increase the suspicions against him. Against this increasing force of proof, the old man begs his honour will send to the prison, where master will be found,—dead! In his love of clemency that functionary yields to the request. There looks something harmless about the old negro, something that warms his honour's legal coldness. An officer is despatched, and soon returns with a description that corresponds with the old man's. "He waited on Marston, made Marston's cell his home; but, your honour—and I have the assurance of the gaoler—he was not Marston's nigger; all that man's niggers were sold for the benefit of his creditors." So says the official, returning to his august master with cringing servility. His honour, in the fulness of his wisdom, and with every regard for legal straightforwardness (his honour searched into the profoundest depths of the "nigger statutes" while learning the tailoring trade, which he now pursues with great success), is now doubly satisfied that the negro before him is a vagabond—perhaps, and he is more than half inclined to believe he is, the very marauder who has been committing so many depredations about the city. With a profound admonition, wisdom glowing from his very countenance the while, he orders him twenty-nine paddle on his bare posteriors,—is sorry the law does not give him power to extend the number. And with compliments for the lucky fellows who

have thus timely relieved the public of such a dangerous outlaw, his honour orders him to be taken away to that prison-house where even-handed democracy has erected a place for torturing the souls of men who love liberty.

He will get the stripes—large, democratic stripes,—generously laid on. How much more he will get remains for a proud state, in its sovereign littleness, to provide. His honour, feeling his duties toward the state discharged, and his precautionary measures for the protection of the people fully exemplified in this awful judgment, orders one of the officers to summon Mr. Ford Fosdick, a distinguished gentleman of the state's own, who, he is quite sure, will not neglect her more important interests. Bob has no interests in this world, nor doth he murmur that he hath not eaten bread for fourteen hours. Kindliness yet lingers in his withered face as he goes forth, yields submission to a state's injustice, and bares his back before he eats.

"Return him after administering the dressing," says his honour, directing his remarks to the official about to lead his victim away. That functionary, half turning, replies with a polite bow.

The reader, we feel assured, will excuse a description of this unsavoury dressing, beautifully administered on behalf of a republican state that makes it a means of crushing out the love of liberty. Bob has received his dressing and returned; but he has no tears to shed for democrats who thus degrade him.

Mr. Ford Fosdick, a gentleman of the learned profession, very straight of person, and most bland of manners, is what may be called escheator in ordinary to the state. Keeping a sharp eye on her interests, he has anticipated the commands

of his august master, presents his polite person very unexpectedly in his honour's court-room. Fosdick, in addition to an excellent reputation for being the very best gentleman "nigger grabber" the state ever had, is well thought of in fashionable circles, having fought two duels of the most desperate character. He is of middle stature, with a face finely oval, and to which are added features of much softness, altogether giving him more the appearance of a well-ordained divine, than the medium of those high functions by which the state's "grab-all" of homeless negroes distinguishes himself. If the state tolerated an ignominy, Ford Fosdick (between whom there exists a mutual partnership) found in it an apology for the part he played; for—let no man blush when we tell it—the sum total for which friendless, homeless, and ownerless negroes sold for in the market was equally divided between them. Generous as was this copartnership, there were few well-disposed persons independent enough to sanction it; while here and there an outspoken voice said it was paying a premium for edging Fosdick's already sharp appetite for apprehending the wretched, who (God save the state's honour!) having no means of protecting themselves, would be sold for the sovereign interests of his own pocket, instead of the peace of the dear people, of which the state was ever jealous. Mr. Fosdick is present,—thanks his honour the mayor: he thinks he has seen the negro before; that he is a prowler not a doubt can exist. Quite indifferent as to his own interests, he says the city is literally beset with such vermin: in his own mind, however, he has not a doubt but that something handsome will be realised from the sale of the old fellow. There is now a most fearful case in the city,—a negro

belonging to Mr. Grabguy has become mad with disobedience: they have chained him to the floor, but he sets everything at defiance, threatens the lives of all who come near him,—says he will die or be free. Against this there is little hope for old Bob; his crooked story will not suit the high considerations of these amiable worthies of state: he must be siezed and dragged to the workhouse, there to await the result. It is a profitable morning's work for Mr. Ford Fosdick, who makes a large note in his ledger, and will soon carry out a very acceptable item on behalf of his dear self. So, while Bob eats his corn-grits in a cell, and his heart beats high with purity, Mr. Ford Fosdick revels in luxury he thinks not ill-gotten.

Due notice, in accordance with the statutes, is given to all persons whomsoever may claim a piece of property answering the description of Daddy Bob, as herein set forth. Weeks pass, but no one comes to claim Bob. In the eyes of an ignoble law he is a cast out, homeless upon the world; and as such must be sold. He is put up at the man-shambles, and, by order of Mr. Ford Fosdick, sold to Mr. Cordes Kemp for the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars, one half of which sum is the state's own, the other Mr. Ford Fosdick's. Mr. Cordes Kemp had seen Bob working about the wharf, and learned that the old man was of more value than his outward appearance indicated, inasmuch as he was a good carpenter; which we have not before informed the reader. But Bob had never been accustomed to a cruel master: such Cordes Kemp was to the fullest extent of the term. A few months passed, and Bob became heartily sick of his new master, who gave him little to eat, and had nearly ended his life with labour and the lash. Finding he

could no longer stand such treatment, he fled to the swamp ; and for two years did he make his home among the morasses and hillocks, now making his bed by the trunk of a fallen tree, then seeking shelter in a temporary 'camp built with the axe he carried away with him. At times he was forced to make food of roots, nuts, and such wild fruit as the woods afforded ; and as the ravens found food, so the outcast man did not suffer while an all-wise Providence watched over him. And then he found a kind friend in old Jerushe—Aunt Jerushe, as she was commonly called, who lived on a plantation a few miles from his hiding-place, and met him at night, and shared her coarse meal with him. Jerushe's heart was full of kindness ; she would have given him more, but for the want thereof. Full two years did even-handed democracy drive the old man homeless to seek a shelter among the poisonous reptiles of the morass. Mr. Cordes Kemp must regain his property, and to that generous end he puts forth the following extremely southern proclamation, which may be found in all respectable morning journals, on posters hung at the " Rough and Ready," at " Your House," and at " Our House " :—

" SEVENTY-FIVE (75) DOLLARS REWARD is offered for the delivery of my old negro carpenter man named Bob, in gaol in Charleston, within a month from this date. The said Bob is a complete carpenter, about sixty-five years of age, has a fine, full, good-natured face, knock-kneed, bald-headed, and ran away about two years ago : he is thought to be harboured in Charleston or James' Island. He was bought of Mr. Ford Fosdick, on behalf of the state.

June 28, —

CORDES KEMP."

Mr. Cordes Kemp, sorely grieved at the loss of so venerable and valuable a piece of property,—and which he bought of the state, for the rights of which he is a great champion,—will give the above sum in hard cash to the clever fellow who will secure it within a prison, so he may get it. If this cannot be done, he will declare him an outlaw, offer a premium for the old man's head, and, with the bleeding trophy, demand the premium paid by the state. However, seventy-five dollars is no mean offer for so old a negro, and as the said negro cannot be a fast runner, the difficulty of catching him will not be very great, while the sport will be much more exciting. Romescos and Dan Bengal keep a sharp look-out for all such little chances of making money; and as their dogs are considered the very best and savagest in the country, they feel certain they will be able to deliver the article over to Mr. Kemp in a very few days.

A few days after the appearance of Mr. Cordes Kemp's proclamation, these two worthies may be seen riding along the Camden Road, a sandy level, with little to indicate its tortuous course save a beaten and irregular path through a forest of stately pines. Their reddish-coloured home-spun clothes, set loosely, and their large, felt hats, slouching over their bearded faces, give their figures a brigand-like appearance which excites apprehension. They are heavily armed with rifles, revolvers, and bowie-knives; and as their horses move along at a quick walk, the riders may be heard keeping up an animated discussion on matters of state policy. The state and its policy is a matter of deep interest to slave-dealer and slave-hunter; none discuss them with more pertinacity. And as every great measure

is supposed to have some bearing, directly or indirectly, on the right of one class to enslave the other, a never-ceasing political jar is kept up by these worthies, and too often finds its way into the public acts of men who should 'be far removed above their selfishness.

The horse on which Romescos rides, a sprightly dark-bay, seeming to have an instinctive knowledge of his master's pursuit, pricks his ears erect, and keeps his head turning from one side to the other, as if watching the approach of some object in the forest. A few paces ahead are seven fierce hounds, now scenting about the ground, then scampering through the trees, and again, quickly obeying the call, return to the horses. Not a bark is heard, not a growl escapes them! Nothing could be under more explicit subjection—not even those northern dogs who pollute their own free soil by making it a forest, where the souls of men are humbled, and where, willing allies of the sport, they desecrate that holy sentence, "Our Pilgrim Fathers!"

Presently the lean figure of a man is seen advancing from a thicket in the distance. Rifle in hand he advances a few paces, leans against the trunk of a pine tree, relieves his shoulders of a well-filled haversack, and supports his arms on the stock of his weapon, the muzzle of which he sets in the ground. He will wait the horsemen's coming. With lightning quickness the hounds start suddenly, prick up their ears, make a bound forward. "Hold there!" exclaims Romescos, at the same time directing Bengal's attention to the figure far away to the right. His horse shies, an imprecation quickly follows; the dogs as suddenly obey the word, and crouch back to await another signal.

"Nothing, I reckon!" returns Bengal, coolly, as the figure in the distance is seen with smoking fusee lighting a cigar.

Romescos thinks he is a gentleman returning from hunting in the big swamp, to the north. He has a kind of presentiment, nevertheless, that some lucky prize will turn up before sunset.

"Well, strangers, what luck to day?" enquires the hunter, as they run up their horses. At the same time he gracefully raises a delicate hand, relieves his mouth of the cigar, twists a well-trimmed mustache, and lifts his hunting-cap from off his head, disclosing a finely-chiselled face.

"Not a shy!" replies Romescos, taking a cigar from his side pocket, and motioning his hand: the hunter politely extends his habanna, with which he communicates a light to his own. It is well nigh noon-day, and at the hunter's invitation do they dismount, seat themselves at the foot of the tree, and regale with bread, cheese, and brandy, he draws from his haversack.

"Thought ye'd got game in that," remarks Bengal, measuredly. He has scoured the woods, but found little game of the kind he hunts. "Our game is of a different species: you, I take it, hunt niggers, I'm in search of birds." "Would have no objection to a stray deer or two!" is the reply, as he passes his horn and flask to Romescos, who helps himself to a *dose* of the liquid, which, he says, smacking his lips, is not bad to take.

"Especially when yer on a hunting excursion!" rejoins Bengal.

"Now," says the gentleman hunter, quietly resuming his cigar, "as you do not hunt my game, nor I yours, I think I can give you a scent that may prove profitable."

"Where away?" interrupts Bengal. Romescos respects the stranger—he has dignity concealed beneath his hunting garb, which the quick eye recognised as it flashed upon him. He gives Bengal a significant wink, the meaning of which he instinctively understands—"Don't be rude,—he belongs to one of the first families!"

The stranger lays his left hand on Romescos' arm, and with the fore finger of his right hand pointing to the southwest, says, "My plantation is nine miles in that direction. I left it this morning, early. In crossing an inlet of the *Pedee*, I discovered white smoke, far ahead, curling upward through the trees, and expanding itself in the clear blue atmosphere. Feeling sure it indicated the haunt of run-aways, I approached it stealthily, and had almost unconsciously come upon a negro, who, suddenly springing from his hiding-place, ran to the water's edge, plunged in, and swam to a little island a few yards in the stream. It did not become me to pursue him, so I passed on heedlessly, lest he might have companions, who would set upon me, and make me an easy prey to their revengeful feelings." As each word fell from the stranger's lips, Romescos and his companion became irresistibly excited.

Again repeating the directions, which the stranger did with great precision, they drank a parting social glass: the mounted huntsmen thanked the pedestrian for his valuable information, gave him a warm shake of the hand, and, as he arranged his haversack, rode off at full gallop in the direction indicated. The dogs, cunning brutes, trained to the state's brutality, mutely kept in advance. "In luck yet!" exclaims Bengal, as they rode onward, in high glee, anticipating the valuable game about to fall into their hands.

"Ho! dogs—and back!" shrieked Romescos, at the top of his shrill voice, his sandy hair hanging in tufts over his little reddened face, now glowing with excitement. Instantly the dogs started off through the thicket, and after making a circle of about a mile, returned with heads up, and eyes fiercely flashing. Trailing in a semicircle ahead they seemed eager for another command.

"Better keep them back," mutters Bengal; and as Romescos gives the word,—*"Come back!"* they form a trail behind.

Now white fleecy clouds begin to obscure the sun; then it disappears in a murky haze, and is no longer their guide. After two hours' riding they find a wrong turn has led them far away from their course, and to avoid retracing their steps they make a short cut through the thicket. In another hour they have reached the bank of the stream they sought. Dogs, horses, and men, together drink of its limpid waters, and proceed onward. They have yet several miles of travel before reaching the spot designated by the strange hunter; and seeking their way along the bank is a slow and tedious process. The prize—that human outcast, who has no home where democracy rules,—is the all-absorbing object of their pursuit; money is the god of their hellish purpose.

It is near night-fall, when they, somewhat wearied of the day's ride, halt on a little slope that extends into the river, and from which a long view of its course above opens out. It seems a quiet, inviting spot, and so sequestered that Bengal suggests it be made a resting-place for the night.

"Not a whisper," says Romescos, who, having dis-

mounted, is nervously watching some object in the distance. It is a pretty spot, clothed in softest verdure. How suddenly the quick eye of Romescos discovered the white smoke curling above the green foliage! "See! see!" he whispers again, motioning his hand behind, as Bengal stretches his neck, and looks eagerly in the same direction. "Close dogs—close!" he demands, and the dogs crouch back, and coil their sleek bodies at the horses' feet. There, little more than a mile ahead, the treacherous smoke curls lazily upward, spreading a white haze in the blue atmosphere. Daddy Bob has a rude camp there. A few branches serve for a covering, the bare moss is his bed; the fires of his heart would warm it, were nothing more at hand! Near by is the island on which he seeks refuge when the enemy approaches; and from this lone spot—(his home for more than two years)—has he sent forth many a fervent prayer, beseeching Almighty God to be his shield and his deliverer. It was but yesterday he saw Jerushe, who shared with him her corn-cakes, which, when she does not meet him at his accustomed spot, she places at the foot of a marked tree. Bob had added a few chips to his night fire, (his defence against tormenting mosquitoes), and made his moss bed. Having tamed an owl and a squirrel, they now make his rude camp their home, and share his crumbs. The squirrel nestles above his head, as the owl, moping about the camp entrance, suddenly hoots a warning and flutters its way into the thicket. Starting to his feet with surprise—(the squirrel chirping at the sudden commotion), the tramp of horses breaks fearfully upon the old man's ear; bewildered he bounds from the camp. Two water oaks stand a few feet from its entrance, and through them he describes his

pursuers bearing down upon him at full speed, the dogs making the very forest echo with their savage yelps. They are close upon him; the island is his only refuge! Suddenly he leaps to the bank, plunges into the stream, and with death-like struggles gains the opposite shore, where he climbs a cedar, as the dogs, eager with savage pursuit, follow in his wake, and are well nigh seizing his extremities ere they cleared their vicious spring. The two horsemen vault to the spot from whence the old man plunged into the water; and while the dogs make hideous ravings beneath the tree, they sit upon their horses, consulting, as the old man, from the tree top, looks piteously over the scene. Life has few charms for him; death would not be unwelcome.

The tedious journey, and disappointment at seeing the old man's resolution, has excited Romescos' ire. "He's an old rack—not worth much, but he doesn't seem like Kemp's old saw-horse," Romescos remarks to Bengal, as his hawk eye scans the old man perched among the cedar branches. They are not more than forty yards apart, and within speaking distance. Bengal, less excited, thinks it better to secure the old "coon" without letting the dogs taste of him.

"They'll only hold him with a firm grip, when he dismounts, and swim him safe back," grumblingly returns Romescos. "Now! old nig"—(Romescos shouts at the top of his voice, directing himself to the old man) just trot back here—come along!"

The old man shakes his head, and raises his hands, as if pleading for mercy.

"You won't, eh?" returns the angry man, raising his rifle in an attitude of preparation. Bengal reminds

Romescos that his horse is not accustomed to firing from the saddle.

"I will larn him, then," is the reply.

"Mas'r," says Bob, putting out his hand and uncovering his bald head, "I can harm no white man. Let me live where 'um is, and die where 'um is."

"None a' that ar kind a' nigger talk;—just put it back here, or ye'll get a plug or two out a' this long Bill. (He points to his rifle.) "Ye'll come down out of that—by heavens you will!"

"Wing him; don't shoot the fool!" suggests Bengal, as the old man, pleading with his pursuers, winds his body half round the tree. Tick! tick! went the cock of Romescos' rifle; he levelled it to his eye, a sharp—whistling report rung through the air, and the body of the old man, shot through the heart, lumbered to the earth, as a deadly shriek sounds high above the echoes over the distant landscape—"Mas'r in heaven take 'um and have merey on 'um!" gurgles on the air: his body writhes convulsively—the devouring dogs spring savagely upon the ration—all is over with the old slave!

Instantly with the report of the rifle, Romescos' horse darts, vaults toward the oaks, halts suddenly, and, ere he has time to grasp the reins, throws him headlong against one of their trunks. An oath escapes his lips as from the saddle he lifted; not a word more did he lisp, but sank on the ground a corpse. His boon companion, forgetting the dogs in their banquet of flesh, quickly dismounts, seizes the body in his arms, the head hanging carelessly from the shoulders: a few quivering shrugs, and all is over. "Neck broken, and dead!" ejaculates the affrighted companion,

resting the dead hunter's back against his left knee, and with his right hand across the breast, moving the head to and fro as if to make sure life has left.

"Poor Anthony,—it's a bad end; but the state should bury him with honours; he ware the best 'un at this kind a' business the state ever had," mutters Bengal, glancing revengefully toward the island, where his democratic dogs are busy in the work of destruction. Then he stretches the lifeless body on the ground, crosses those hands great of blood and treachery, draws a handkerchief from his pocket, spreads it over the ghastly face fast discolouring, as the riderless horse, as if by instinct, bounds back to the spot and suddenly halts over his dead master, where he frets the ground with his hoof, and, with nostrils extended, scents along the body. Having done this, as if in sorrow, he will rest on the ground beside him; slowly he lumbers his body down, his head and neck circled toward that of the lifeless lumber on the ground.

The disconsolate hunter here leaves his useless companion, swims the stream, recalls the gory-mouthed dogs, looks with satisfaction on the body of the torn slave. "You're settled for," says Bengal, as with his right foot he kicks together the distended and torn limbs. "Not all loss, yet!" he adds, a glow of satisfaction infusing his face. With the ghastly head for proof, he will apply for, and perhaps obtain, the state's reward for the despatch of outlaws: and with the gory trophy he returns across the limpid stream to his hapless companion, who, having watched over during the night, he will convey into the city to-morrow morning. Over his body the very humorous Mr. Brien Moon will hold one of those ceremonies called

inquests, for which, fourteen dollars and forty cents being paid into his own pocket, he will order the valueless flesh under the sod, handsomely treating with cigars and drinks those who honour him with their presence.

In the old man's camp, a hatchet, a few bits of corn-bread, (old Jerushc's gift), and two fresh caught fish, are found; they constituted his earthly store. But he was happy, for his heart's impulses beat high above the conflict of a State's wrongs. That spirit so pure has winged its way to another and better world, where, with that of the monster who wronged nature while making cruelty his pastime, it will appear before a just God, who sits in glory and judgeth justly.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

IN WHICH IT IS SHOWN HOW DEMOCRATS LIVE FEARING
ONE ANOTHER.

THE reader will please remember that we left Nicholas, maddened to distraction at the perfidy of which Grabguy makes him the victim, chained to an iron ring in the centre of Graspum's slave pen. In addition to this very popular mode of subduing souls that love liberty, his wife and children are sold from him, the ekings of his toil, so carefully laid up as the boon of his freedom, are confiscated, and the wrong-doer now seeks to cover his character by proclaiming to a public without sympathy that no such convention existed, no such object entertained. Grabguy is a man of position, and lady Grabguy moves well in society no way vulgar; but the slave (the more honourable of the two) hath no voice—he is nothing in the democratic world. Of his origin he knows not; and yet the sting pierces deeper into his burning heart, as he feels that, would justice but listen to his tale, freedom had not been a stranger. No voice in law, no common right of commoners, no power to appeal to the judiciary of his own country, hath he. Overpowered, chained, his very soul tortured with the lash, he still proclaims his resolution—"death or justice!" He will no longer work for him who has stripped away his rights, and while affecting honesty, would crush him bleeding into the earth.

Grabguy will counsel an expedient wherewith further to conceal his perfidy ; and to that end, with seeming 'honesty lady Grabguy would have her fashionable neighbours believe sincere, he will ship the oppressed man to New Orleans, there to be sold.—“ Notwithstanding, he is an extremely valuable nigger,” he says, affecting superlative indifference.

“ I'd rather sell him for a song than he should disturb the peace of the city thus.” To new Orleans Mr. Grabguy sends his unsubdued property ; but that the threatened sale is only a feint to more effectually dissolve the contract and forfeit the money paid as part of his freedom, he soon becomes fully sensible. Doubly incensed at such conduct the fire of his determination burns more fiercely ; if no justice for him be made manifest on earth his spirit is consoled with the knowledge of a 'reward in heaven. Having tortured for months the unyielding man, Grabguy, with blandest professions of kindness, commands that the lacerated be brought back to his domicile. Here, with offers of kindness, and sundry pretexts of his sincerity, the master will pledge his honour to keep faith with his slave. The defrauded wretch knows but too well how little confidence he can place in such promises ; to such promises does he turn a deaf ear. Grabguy, if serious, must give him back his wife, his children, and his hard earnings, in which the joyous hope of gaining freedom was centred : that hope had carried him through many trials. Sad is the dilemma in which Mr. Grabguy finds himself placed ; simple justice to the man would have long since settled the question.

• And now Nicholas is a second time sent to Graspum's

pen, where living men are chained to rings of fierce iron for loving freedom and their country. For twenty-two days and nights is he chained to that floor where his soul had before been tortured. Threats of being returned to New Orleans again ring their leaden music in his ears; but they have no terrors for him; his indignant spirit has battled with torture and vanquished its smart—he will defend himself unto death rather than be made the object of a sham sale. A vessel for New Orleans waits in the harbour a fair wind for sailing. On board of her Mr. Grabguy will carry out his resolve; and to which end the reader will please accompany us to a small cell in Graspum's pen, about fourteen by sixteen feet, and seven in height—(in the centre of which is chained to a ring that man, once so manly of figure, whose features are now worn down by sorrow or distorted by torture)—as three policemen enter to carry out the order of shipment. The heavy chain and shackle with which his left foot is secured yield to him a circuit of some four feet. As the officials advance his face brightens up with animation; his spirit resumes its fiery action, and with a flashing knife, no one knows by whom provided, he bids them advance no further.

"You must go to the whipping-post, my good fellow! I know it's kind of hard; but obey orders we must. Ye see I've gin ye good advice, time and agin; but ye won't take it, and so ye must abide the consequences," says one of the officials, who advances before the others, and addresses himself to the chained man.

"I'll go to a whipping-post no more!" exclaims Nicholas, his angry spirit flashing in his face, as in an attitude of de-

fence he presses his right hand into his bosom, and frowns defiantly upon the intruders.

"My name is Monsel, an officer! Not a word of disobedience," returns the officer, in a peremptory voice.

Another suggests that he had better be throated at once. But the chained victim of democracy's rule warns them against advancing another step. "Either must die if you advance! I have counselled death, and will lay my prostrate body on the cold floor rather than be taken from this cell to the whipping-post. It is far better to die defending my right, than to yield my life under the lash! I appeal to you, officers of the state, protectors of the peace, men who love their right a slave's boon!" The men hesitate, whisper among themselves, seem at a loss as to what course to pursue. "You are setting the laws of the state at defiance, my good fellow!" rejoins Monsel.

"I care not for the law of the state! Its laws for me are founded in wrong, exercised with injustice!" Turning towards the door, Mr. Monsel despatches his fellow-officers for a reinforcement. That there will be a desperate struggle he has no doubt. The man's gestures show him fully armed; and he is stark mad. During the interim, Mr. Monsel will hold a parley with the *boy*. He finds, however, that a few smooth words will not subdue him. One of the officials has a rope in his hand, with which he would make a lasso, and, throwing it over his head, secure him an easy captive. Mr. Monsel will not hear of such a cowardly process. He is a wiry man, with stunted features, and has become enured to the perils of negro catching. Hand to hand he has had many an encounter with

the brutes, and always came off victor ; never did he fail to serve the interests of the state, nor to protect the property of his client. With a sort of bravado he makes another advance. The city esteems him for the valuable services he has rendered its safety ; why should he shrink in this emergency ?

* The chained man, drawing his shining steel from his bosom, says, " You take me not from here, alive." Mr. Monsel's face becomes pale, while Nicholas's flashes angry scowls ; an irresistible nervousness seizes him,—for a moment he hesitates, turns half round to see if his companions stand firm. They are close behind, ready for the spring, like sharp-eyed catamounts ; while around the door anxious visitors crowd their curious faces. The officers second in command file off to the right and left, draw their revolvers, and present them in the attitude of firing. " Use that knife, and you fall !" exclaims one, with a fearful imprecation. At the next moment he fires, as Monsel rushes upon the chained man, followed by half a dozen officials. An agonising shriek is heard, and Monsel, in guttural accents, mutters, " I am a murdered man—he has murdered me ! Oh, my God,—he has murdered me !" Nicholas has plunged the knife into the fleshy part of Monsel's right arm ; and while the bloody weapon, wrested from his hand, lies on the floor, an official drags the wounded man from his grasp. A some rise, others fall upon him like infuriated animals, and but for the timely presence of Grabguy and Graspum would have despatched him like a bullock chained to a stake. The presence of these important personages produces a cessation

* Our southern readers, in a certain state, will readily recognise the scene we here describe.

of hostilities ; but the victim, disarmed, lies prostrate on the ground, a writhing and distorted body, tortured beyond his strength of endurance. A circle where the struggle ensued is wet with blood, in which Nicholas bathes his poor writhing body until it becomes one crimson mass.

All attention is now directed to the wounded man, who, it is found, although he has bled freely of good red blood, is neither fatally nor seriously wounded. It is merely a flesh wound in the arm, such as young gentlemen of the south frequently inflict upon each other for the purpose of sustaining their character for bravery. But the oppressed slave has raised his hand against a white man,—he must pay the penalty with his life ; he no longer can live to keep peaceful citizens in fear and trembling. Prostrate on the floor, the victors gather round him again, as Graspum stoops down and unlocks the shackle from his leg. “ It’s the Ingin, you see : the very devil wouldn’t subdue it, and when once its revenge breaks out you might just as well try to govern a sweeping tornado,” Graspum remarks, coolly, as he calls a negro attendant, and orders the body to be drawn from out the puddle of disfiguring gore. Languidly that poor bosom heaves, his eyes half close, and his motionless lips pale of death.

“ Had I know’d it when I bargained for him, he would never have pestered me in this way, never ! But he looked so likely, and had such a quick insight of things,—Ingin’s Ingin, though !” says Grabguy.

“ The very look might have told you that, my dear fellow ; I sold him to you with your eyes open, and, of course, expected you to be the judge,” interrupts Graspum, his countenance assuming great commercial seriousness.

Mr. Grabguy politely says, he meant no insinuations. "Come, Nicholas! I told you this would be the end on't," he continues, stooping down and taking him by the shoulders, with an air of commiseration.

The bruised body, as if suddenly inspired with new life, raises itself half up, and with eyes opening, gazes vacantly at those around, at its own hands besmeared with gore; then, with a curl of contempt on his lip, at the shackle just released from his limb—"Ah, well, it's ended here; this is the last of me, no doubt," he murmurs, and makes another attempt to rise.

"Don't move from where you are!" commands an official, setting his hand firmly against his right shoulder, and pressing him back. He has got the infective crimson on his hands, chafes them one against the other, perpendicularly, as Nicholas looks at him doubtingly. "It's all over—I'll not harm you; take me to a slaughter-house if you will,—I care not," he says, still keeping his eye on the official.

Grabguy, somewhat moved at the sight, would confirm his harmlessness. "You'll give up now, won't you?" he enquires, and before Nicholas has time to answer, turns to the official, saying, "Yes, I know'd he would!"

The official bows his head significantly, but begs to inform Mr. Grabguy, that the negro, having violated the most sacred law of the state, is no longer under his care. He is a prisoner, and must, as the law directs, answer for the heinous crime just committed. Mr. Grabguy, if he please, may forward his demand to the state department, and by yielding all claim to his criminal property, receive its award—two hundred round dollars, or thereabouts.

"Stand back, gentlemen—stand back, I say!" commands the officer, as the crowd from the outside come pressing in, the news of the struggle having circulated through the city with lightning speed. Rumour, ever ready to spread its fears in a slave state, reported an insurrection, and many were they who armed themselves to the very teeth.

The officer, in answer to a question why he does not take the man away, says he has sent for means to secure him. He had scarcely given out the acceptable information, when an official, followed by a negro man, bearing cords over his right arm, makes his appearance. The oppressed man seems subdued, and as they make the first knot with the cord they wind about his neck, he says, sarcastically, "'Twouldn't be much to hang a slave! Now round my hands. Now, with a half hitch, take my legs!" thus mocking, as it were, while they twist the cords about his yielding limbs. Now they draw his head to his knees, and his hands to his feet, forming a curve of his disabled body. "How I bend to your strong ropes, your strong laws, and your still stronger wills! You make good slip-nooses, and better bows of human bodies," he says, mildly, shaking his head contemptuously. The official, with a brutal kick, reminds him that there will be no joking when he swings by the neck, which he certainly will, to the great delight of many.

"I welcome the reality,—by heaven I do, for only in heaven is there justice for me!" With these words falling from his lips, four negro men seize the body, bear it to the door: an excited crowd having assembled, place it upon a common dray, amid shouts and furious imprecations of

“ D—— him, kill him at once !” Soon the dray rolls speedily away for the county prison, followed by the crowd, who utter a medley of yells and groans, as it disappears within the great gates, bearing its captive to a cell of torture.

CHAPTER XLV.

DEMOCRATIC JUSTICE DEMOCRATICALLY ADMINISTERED.

It is just a week since Nicholas committed the heinous offence of wounding officer Monsel in the arm. That distinguished personage, having been well cared for, is (to use a common phrase) about again, as fresh as ever. With Nicholas the case is very different. His bruised and lacerated body, confined in an unhealthy cell, has received little care. Suspicion of treachery has been raised against him; his name has become a terror throughout the city; and all his bad qualities have been magnified five-fold, while not a person can be found to say a word in praise of his good. That he always had some secret villainy in view no one for a moment doubts; that he intended to raise an insurrection among the blacks every one is quite sure; and that confession of all his forelaid evil designs may be extorted from him, the cruellest means have been resorted to.

The day upon which the trial is to take place has arrived. On the south side of Broad Street there stands a small wooden building, the boarding discoloured and decayed, looking as if it had been accidentally dropped between the walls of two brick buildings standing at its sides. In addition, it has the appearance of one side having been set at a higher elevation than the other for some purpose of

convenience known only to its occupants. About fifteen feet high, its front possesses a plain door, painted green, two small windows much covered with dust, and a round port-hole over the door. A sheet of tin, tacked above the door, contains, in broad yellow letters, the significant names of "Fetter and Felsh, Attorneys at Law." Again, on a board about the size of a shingle, hanging from a nail at the right side of the door, is "*Jabez Fetter, Magistrate.*" By these unmistakable signs we feel assured of its being the department where the legal firm of Fetter and Felsh do their customers—that is, where they dispose of an immense amount of legal filth for which the state pays very acceptable fees. Squire Fetter, as he is usually called, is extremely tall and well-formed, and, though straight of person, very crooked in morals. With an oval and ruddy face, nicely trimmed whiskers, soft blue eyes, tolerably good teeth, he is considered rather a handsome man. But (to use a vulgar phrase) he is death on night orgies and nigger trials. He may be seen any day of the week, about twelve o'clock, standing his long figure in the door of his legal domicile, his hat touching the sill, looking up and then down the street, as if waiting the arrival of a victim upon whom to pronounce one of his awful judgments. Felsh is a different species of person, being a short, stunted man, with a flat, inexpressive face. He has very much the appearance of a man who had been clumsily thrown together for any purpose future circumstances might require. Between these worthies and one Hanz Von Vickeinsteighner there has long existed a business connection, which is now being transferred into a fraternity of good fellowship. Hanz Von Vickeinsteighner keeps a small grocery, a few doors

below : that is, Von, in a place scarcely large enough to turn his fat sides without coming in contact with the counter, sells onions, lagar-beer, and whiskey ; the last-named article is sure to be very bad, inasmuch as his customers are principally negroes. Von is considered a very clever fellow, never a very bad citizen, and always on terms of politeness with a great many squires, and other members of the legal profession. A perfect picture of the good-natured Dutchman is Von, as seen standing his square sides in his doorway, stripped to his leeves, his red cap tipped aside, a crooked grin on his broad fat face, and his hands thrust beneath a white apron into his nether pockets. Von has a great relish for squires and police officers, esteems them the salt of all good, nor ever charges them a cent for his best-brewed lagar-beer. There is, however, a small matter of business in the way, which Von, being rather a sharp logician, thinks it quite as well to reconcile with beer. The picture is complete, when of a morning, some exciting negro case being about to be brought forward, Fetter and Von may be seen, as before described, standing importantly easy in their respective doors ; while Felsh paces up and down the side-walk, seemingly in deep study. On these occasions it is generally said Von makes the criminal "niggers," Felsh orders them caught and brought before Fetter, and Fetter passes awful judgment upon them. Now and then, Felsh will prosecute on behalf of the state, for which that generous embodiment of bad law is debtor the fees.

The city clock has struck twelve ; Fetter stands in his doorway, his countenance wearing an air of great seriousness, Felsh saunters at the outside, now and then making

some legal remark on a point of the negro statutes, and at every turn casting his bleared eye up the street. Presently, Nicholas is seen, his hands pinioned, and a heavy chain about his neck, approaching between two officials. A crowd follows: among it are several patriotic persons who evince an inclination to wrest him from the officials, that they may, according to Judge Lynch's much-used privileges, wreak their vengeance in a summary manner. "The boy Nicholas is to be tried to-day!" has rung through the city: curious lookers-on begin to assemble round the squire's office, and Hanz Von Vickeinsteighner is in great good humour at the prospect of a profitable day at his counter.

"Bring the criminal in!" says Squire Fetter, turning into his office as Nicholas is led in,—still bearing the marks of rough usage. Rows of board seats stretch across the little nook, which is about sixteen feet wide by twenty long, the floor seeming on the verge of giving way under its professional burden. The plaster hangs in broken flakes from the walls, which are exceedingly dingy, and decorated with festoons of melancholy cobwebs. At the farther end is an antique book-case of pine slats, on which are promiscuously thrown sundry venerable-looking works on law, papers, writs, specimens of minerals, branches of coral, alligators' teeth, several ship's blocks, and a bit of damaged fishing-tackle. This is Felsh's repository of antique collections; what many of them have to do with his rough pursuit of the learned profession we leave to the reader's discrimination. It has been intimated by several waggishly-inclined gentlemen, that a valuable record of all the disobedient "niggers" Fetter had condemned to be

hung might be found among this confused collection of antiquities. A deal table, covered with a varnished cloth, standing on the right side of the room, and beside which a ponderous arm-chair is raised a few inches, forms Fetter's tribune. Hanging from the wall, close behind this, is a powder-horn and flask, several old swords, a military hat somewhat broken, and sundry other indescribable things, enough to make one's head ache to contemplate.

The office is become crowded to excess, the prisoner (his hands unpinioned, but the heavy chain still about his neck !) is placed in a wooden box fronting the squire's table, as a constable is ordered to close the court. It is quite evident that Fetter has been taking a little too much on the previous night ; but, being a "first-rate drinker," his friends find an apology in the arduousness of his legal duties. In answer to a question from Felsh, who has been looking at the prisoner somewhat compassionately, the serving constable says two of the jury of "freeholders" he has summoned have not yet made their appearance. Fetter, who was about to take his seat in the great chair, and open court, politely draws forth his watch, and after addressing a few words to the persons present, on the necessity of keeping order in a court with such high functions, whispers a few words in Felsh's ear, holding his hand to his mouth the while.

"Maintain order in court!" says Fetter, nodding his head to the official ; "we will return in five minutes." Soon they are seen passing into Von's crooked establishment, where, joined by a number of very fashionable friends, they "take" of the "*hardware*" he keeps in a sly place under the counter, in a special bottle for his special customers. Having taken several special glasses, Fetter is much

annoyed at sundry remarks made by his friends, who press round him, seeming anxious to instruct him on intricate points of the "nigger statutes." One hopes he will not let the nigger off without a jolly good hanging; another will bet his life Felsh takes care of that small item, for then his claim on the state treasury will be doubled. And now, Fetter finding that Felsh, having imbibed rather freely of the liquid, hath somewhat diminished his brilliant faculties, will take him by the arm and return into court. With all the innate dignity of great jurists they enter their sanctum of justice, as the usher exclaims, "Court! Court!—hats off and cigars out!"

"Jury are present?" enquires Fetter, with great gravity, bowing to one side and then to the other, as he resumes his seat on the tribune.

"Present, yer 'oner;" the officer answers in a deep, gruff voice, as he steps forward and places a volume of the revised statutes before that high jurist. Fetter moves the book to his left, where Felsh has taken his seat. With placid countenance and softest accents, Fetter orders the prisoner at the bar to stand up while our constable calls the names of the jurymen.

Our victim of democracy's even-handed justice obeys the summons, rising as his dark eyes flash angrily, and that hatred wrong which lurks in his bosom seems kindling anew. "James M'Neilty! Terrance M'Quade! Harry Johanna! Baldwin Dobson! Patrick Henessy! Be dad and I have um all now, yer 'oner," ejaculates the official, exultingly, as one by one the "nigger jurymen" respond to the call, and take their seats on a wooden slab at the right of his Honour, squire Fetter. "You are, I may be sure, gentle-

men, freeholders ?” enquires his honour, with a mechanical bow. They answer simultaneously in the affirmative, and then, forming in a half circle, lay their hands on a volume of Byron, which Fetter makes do for a Bible, and subscribe to the sacred oath Felsh administers. By the Giver of all Good will they return a verdict according to the evidence and the facts. “Gentlemen will take their seats (the officer must preserve order in the court !) the prisoner may also sit down,” says Felsh, the words falling from his lips with great gravity, as, opening the revised statutes, he rises to address the jury.

“Gentlemen of the Jury¹ (suddenly hesitates for a moment) the solemn duties which you are now called upon to perform (at this moment Terrance M’Quade draws a small bottle from his pocket, and after helping himself to a portion of its contents passes it to his fellows, much to the surprise of the learned Felsh, who hopes such indecorum will cease) and they are duties which you owe to the safety of the state as well as to the protection of your own families, are much enhanced by the superior mental condition of the criminal before you.” Here Mr. Felsh calls for a volume of Prince’s Digest, from which he instructs the jury upon several important points of the law made and provided for making the striking a white person by a slave or person of colour a capital offence. “Your honour, too, will see the case to which I refer—‘*State and Prudence*!’”. The learned gentleman extends the book, that his august eyes may have a near view.

“Your word is quite sufficient, Mr. Felsh,” returns Fetter, his eyes half closed, as he waves his hand, adding that he is perfectly posted on the case cited. “Page 499,

I think you said?" he continues, placing his thumbs in his waistcoat-armlets, with an air of indifference.

"Yes, your honour," rejoins Felsh, with a polite bow. His honour, ordering a glass of water mixed with a little brandy, Mr. Felsh continues:—"The case, gentlemen, before you, is that of the '*State v. Nicholas*.' This case, gentlemen, and the committal of the heinous crime for which he stands arraigned before you, has excited no small amount of interest in the city. It is one of those peculiar cases where intelligence creeps into the property interest of our noble institution—the institution of slavery—makes the property restless, disobedient to the will and commands of the master, disaffecting to the slave population, and dangerous to the peace and the progress of the community. Now, gentlemen (his honour has dropped into a moderate nap—Mr. Felsh pauses for a moment, and touches him gently on the shoulder, as he suddenly resumes his wonted attention, much to the amusement of those assembled) you will be told by the witnesses we shall here produce, that the culprit is an exceedingly intelligent and valuable piece of property, and as such might, even now, be made extremely valuable to his master (Mr. Grabguay is in court, watching his interests!) who paid a large sum for him, and was more than anxious to place him at the head of his manufacturing establishment, which office he was fully capable of filling. Now, gentlemen—his honour will please observe this point—much as I may consider the heavy loss the master will suffer by the conviction of the prisoner, and which will doubtless be felt severely by him, I cannot help impressing upon you the necessity of overlooking the individual loss to the master, maintaining the law, and pre-

serving the peace of the community and stability of our noble institution. That the state will only allow the master two hundred dollars for his valuable slave you have nothing to do with—you must sink that from your minds, listen to the testimony, and form your verdict in accordance with *that* and the law. That he is a dangerous slave, has long maintained a disobedience towards his owner, set the authorities at defiance, attempted to create an insurrection, and made a dangerous assault on a white man (which constitutes a capital offence) we shall now call witnesses to prove. The learned gentleman having finished his opening for the prosecution, sits down. After a moment's pause, he orders an attendant to bring something "to take"—"Similar to the squire's!" he ejaculates, hoarsely.

"Gentlemen!" says his honour, as if seized with the recollection of some important appointment, the time for which was close at hand, drawing out his watch, "Call witnesses as fast as possible! The evidence in this case, I reckon, is so direct and positive, that the case can be very summarily despatched."

"I think so, too! yer 'oner," interrupts Terrance M'Quade, starting from his seat among the five jurors. Terrance has had what in vulgar parlance is termed a "tough time" with several of his own stubborn negroes; and having already heard a deal about this very bad case, is prepared to proclaim him fit only to be hanged. His honour reminds Terrance that such remarks from a juror are neither strictly legal nor in place.

The first witness called is Toby, a slave of Terrance M'Quade, who has worked in the same shop with Nicholas. Toby heard him say he got his larnin' when he was young,—

that his heart burned for his freedom—that he knew he was no slave by right—that some day would see him a great man; that if all those poor wretches now in slavery knew as much as he did, they would rise up, have their liberties and proclaim justice without appealing to heaven for it!——”

“I said all that, and more!” interrupted the criminal bondman, rising quickly to his feet, and surveying those around him with a frown of contempt.

“Silence! sit down!” resounds from the officer.

He will sit down, but they cannot quench the fires of his soul; they may deny him the commonest right of his manhood, but they cannot take from him the knowledge that God gave him those rights; they may mock with derision the firm mien with which he disputes the power of his oppressors, and their unjust laws, but they cannot make him less than a man in his own feelings!

His honour, squire Fetter, reminds him that it were better he said nothing, sit down,—or be punished instanter. Turning to Felsh, who is sipping his quencher, he enquires what that gentleman means to prove by the witness Toby?

“His intention to raise an insurrection, yer honour!” Felsh, setting his glass aside, quickly responds, wiping his lips as he adds, “It is essentially necessary, yer honour!”

His honour, leaning forward, places the fore-finger of his right hand to his lip, and making a very learned gesture, says, “Toby has said enough to establish that point.”

The next witness is Mr. Brien Calligan, a criminal in the prison, who for his good behaviour has been promoted to the honourable post of under-warden. Mr. Brien

Calligan testifies that the prisoner, while in prison, confined in a cell under his supervision, admitted that he intended to kill Mr. Monsel when he inflicted the wound. He must qualify this statement, however, by saying that the prisoner added he was altogether beside himself with rage.

Grabguy, who has been intently watching the proceedings, suddenly springs to his feet. He would like to know if that admission was not extorted from the culprit by cruelty !

Mr. Brien Calligan pauses a moment, looks innocently at the court, as one of the jurors suggests that quite enough evidence has already been put in to warrant a conviction. It's a pity to hang such valuable property ; but, being bent on disturbing the peace of the community, what else can be done ?

His honour listens with great concern to the juror's remarks, but suggests that Mr. Grabguy better not interrupt the court with questions. That he has an indirect interest in the issue of the suit not a doubt exists, but if he be not satisfied with the witness's statement he has his remedy in the court of appeals, where, upon the ground of testimony having been elicited by coercion or cruelty, a new trial will probably be granted.

Mr. Grabguy would merely suggest to his honour that although sentencing a negro to be hung may be a matter of small consequence to him, yet his position in society gives him a right to be heard with proper respect. Aware that he does not move in that exclusively aristocratic sphere of society awarded to lawyers in general, he is no less entitled to respect, and being a man of honour, and an

underman as well, he shall always insist on that respect.

"Order, order!" demand a dozen voices. His honour's face flashing with indignation, he seizes the statutes, and rising to his feet, is about to throw them with unerring aim at the unhandsome head of the municipal functionary. A commotion here ensues. Felsh is esteemed not a bad fighting man; and rising almost simultaneously, his face like a full moon peeping through a rain cloud, attempts to pacify his colleague, Fetter. The court is foaming with excitement; Mr. Felsh is excited, the jury are excited to take a little more drink, the constables are excited, the audience are excited to amusement; Messrs. Fetter and Felsh's court rocks with excitement: the only unexcited person present is the criminal, who looks calmly on, as if contemplating with horror the debased condition of those in whose hands an unjust law has placed his life.

As the uproar and confusion die away, and the court resumes its dignity, Mr. Grabguy, again asserting his position of a gentleman, says he is not ashamed to declare his conviction to be, that his honour is not in a fit state to try a "nigger" of his: in fact, the truth must be told, he would not have him sit in judgment upon his spaniel.

At this most unwarranted declaration Fetter rises from his judicial chair, his feelings burning with rage, and bounds over the table at Grabguy, prostrating his brother Felsh, tables, benches, chairs, and everything else in his way,—making the confusion complete. Several gentlemen interpose between Fetter; but before he can reach Grabguy, who is no small man in physical strength (which he has developed by fighting his way "through many a crowd" on

election days), that municipal dignitary is ejected, *sans ceremonie*, into the street.

"Justice to me! My honest rights, for which I laboured when he gave me no bread, would have saved him his compunction of conscience: I wanted nothing more," says Nicholas, raising the side of his coarse jacket, and wiping the sweat from his brow.

"Silence there!" demands an official, pointing his tipstaff, and punching him on the shoulder.

Grabguy goes to his home, considering and reconsidering his own course. His heart repeats the admonition, "Thou art the wrong-doer, Grabguy!" It haunts his very soul; it lays bare the sources from whence the slave's troubles flow; places the seal of aggression on the state. It is a question with him, whether the state, through its laws, or Messrs. Felter and Felsh, through the justice meted out at their court, play the baser part.

A crowd of anxious persons have gathered about the door, making the very air resound with their shouts of derision. Hans Von Vickeinsteighner, his fat good-natured face shining like a pumpkin on a puncheon, and his red cap dangling above the motley faces of the crowd, moves glibly about, and says they are having a right jolly good time at the law business within.

Fetter, again taking his seat, apologises to the jury, to the persons present, and to his learned brother, Felsh. He is very sorry for this ebullition of passion; but they may be assured it was called forth by the gross insult offered to all present. "Continue the witnesses as fast as possible," he concludes, with a methodical bow.

Mr. Monsel steps forward: he relates the fierce attempt made upon his life; has no doubt the prisoner meant to kill

him, and raise an insurrection. "It is quite enough; Mr. Monsel may stand down," interposes Felsh, with an air of dignity.

Paul Vampton, an intelligent negro, next bears testimony. "The criminal at the bar (Paul does not believe he has a drop of negro blood in his veins) more than once told him his wife and children were sold from him, his rights stripped from him, the hopes of gaining his freedom for ever gone. Having nothing to live for, he coveted death, because it was more honourable to die in defence of justice, than live the wailing slave of a tyrant's rule."

"I feel constrained to stop the case, gentlemen of the jury," interposes his honour, rising from his seat. "The evidence already adduced is more than sufficient to establish the conviction."

A juror at Terrance McQuade's right, touches that gentleman on the shoulder: he had just cooled away into a nice sleep: "I think so, oo. yer 'oner," rejoins Terrance, in half bewilderment, starting nervously and rubbing his eyes.

A few mumbled words from his honour serve as a charge to the jury. They know the law, and have the evidence before them. "I see not, gentlemen, how you can render a verdict other than guilty; but that, let me here say, I shall leave to your more mature deliberation." With these concluding remarks his honour sips his mixture, and sits down.

Gentlemen of the jury rise from their seats, and form into a circle; Mr Felsh coolly turns over the leaves of the statutes; the audience mutter to themselves; the prisoner stares vacantly over the scene, as if heedless of the issue.

"Guilty! it's that we've made it; and the devil a thing else we could make out of it," exclaims Terrance McQuade,

as they, after the mature length of two minutes' consultation, turn and face his honour. They pause for a reply.

"Stand up, prisoner!"

"Hats off during the sentence!" rejoins a constable.

"Guilty." His honour rises to his feet with ponderous dignity to pronounce the awful sentence. "Gentlemen, I must needs compliment your verdict; you could have come to no other." His honour bows gracefully to the jury, reminds gentlemen present of the solemn occasion, and will hear what the prisoner has to say for himself.

An angry frown pervades the prisoner's face. He has nothing to say. Burning tears course down his cheeks; but they are not tears of contrition,—Oh, no! he has no such tears to shed. Firmly and resolutely he says, "Guilty! guilty! yes, I am guilty—guilty by the guilty laws of a guilty land. You are powerful—I am weak; you have might—I have right. Mine is not a chosen part. Guilty on earth, my soul will be innocent in heaven; and before a just judge will my cause be proclaimed, before a holy tribunal my verdict received, and by angels my soul be enrolled among the righteous. Your earthly law seals my lips; your black judgment—enough to make heaven frown and earth tremble, fearing justice—crushes the man; but you cannot judge the spirit. In fear and trembling your wrongs will travel broken paths—give no man rest. I am guilty with you; I am innocent in heaven. He who judgeth all things right receives the innocent soul into his bosom; and He will offer repentance to him who takes the innocent life." He pauses, as his eye, with intense stare, rests upon his honour.

"You are through?" enquires his honour, raising his eyebrows.

"In this court of justice," firmly replies the prisoner.

"Order in the court!" is echoed from several voices.

"Nicholas—Nicholas Grabguy! the offence for which you stand convicted is one for which I might, according to the laws of the land, pronounce a more awful sentence than the one now resolved upon. But the advanced and enlightened spirit of the age calls for a more humane manner of taking life and inflicting punishments. Never before has it been my lot to pass sentence—although I have pronounced the awful benediction on very many—on so valuable and intelligent a slave. I regret your master's loss as much as I sympathise with your condition; and yet I deplore the hardened and defiant spirit you yet evince. And permit me here to say, that while you manifest such an unyielding spirit there is no hope of pardon. Nicholas! you have been tried before a tribunal of the land, by the laws of your state, and found guilty by a tribunal of competent men. Nothing is now left for me but to pass sentence upon you in accordance with the law. The sentence of the court is, that you be taken hence to the prison from whence you came, and on this day week, at twelve o'clock, from thence to the gallows erected in the yard thereof, and there and then be hanged by the neck until you are dead; and may the Lord have mercy on your soul!"

His honour, concluding nervously, orders the jury to be dismissed, and the court adjourned.

How burns the inward hate of the oppressed culprit, as mutely, his hands pinioned, and the heavy chain about his neck, he is led away to his prison-house, followed by a deriding crowd. "Come that happy day, when men will cease to make their wrong fire my very blood!" he says, firmly marching to the place of death.

CHAPTER XLVI.

PROSPERITY THE RESULT OF JUSTICE.

TEN years have rolled into the past since the Rosebrook family—moved by a sense of right to enquire into the errors of a bad system of labour—resolved to try the working of a new scheme. There was to be no cutting, nor lashing, nor abusing with overburdening tasks. Education was to regulate the feelings, kindness to expand the sympathies, and justice to bind the affections and stimulate advancement. There were only some fifty negroes on the Rosebrook plantation, but its fame for raising great crops had resounded far and wide. Some planters said it “astonished everything,” considering how much the Rosebrooks indulged their slaves. With a third less in number of hands, did they raise more and better cotton than their neighbours: and then everything was so neat and bright about the plantation, and everybody looked so cheerful and sprightly. When Rosebrook’s cotton was sent into the market, factors said it was characteristic of his systemised negroes; and when his negroes rolled into the city, as they did on holidays, all brightened up with new clothes, everybody said—There were Rosebrook’s dandy, fat, and saucy “niggers.” And then the wise prophets, who had all along predicted that Rosebrook’s project would never amount to much, said it was all owing to his lady, who was worth her weight in gold at managing negroes. And she

did conceive the project, too; and her helping hand was felt like a quickening spring, giving new life to the physical being. That the influence might not be lost upon others of her sex in the same sphere of life, she was ever reasoning upon the result of female sympathy. She felt that, were it exercised properly, it could raise up the menial slave, awaken his inert energies, give him those moral guides which elevate his passive nature, and regenerate that manhood which provides for its own good.

They had promised their people that all children born at and after a given date should be free; that all those over sixty should be nominally free, the only restriction being the conditions imposed by the state law; that slaves under fifteen years of age, and able to do plantation work, should, during the ten years prescribed, be allowed for their extra labour at a given rate, and expected to have the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars set to their credit: that all prime people should be required to work a given number of hours, as per task, for master, beyond which they would be allotted a "patch" for cultivation, the products of which were entrusted to Rosebrook for sale, and the proceeds placed in missus' savings bank to their credit. The people had all fulfilled the required conditions ere the ten years expired; and a good round sum for extra earnings was found in the bank. The Rosebrooks kept faith with their slaves; and the happy result is, that Rosebrook, in addition to the moral security he has founded for the good of his people—and which security is a boon of protection between master and slave—has been doubly repaid by the difference in amount of product, the result of encouragement incited by his enlightened system. The family were bound in affection to their slaves;

and the compact has given forth its peaceful products for a good end. Each slave being paid for his or her labour, there is no decline of energy, no disaffection, no clashing of interests, no petulant disobedience. Rosebrook finds his system the much better of the two. It has relieved him of a deal of care ; he gets more work for less money ; he laughs at his neighbours, who fail to raise as much cotton with double the number of negroes ; and he knows that his negroes love instead of fear him. And yet, notwithstanding the proof he has produced, the whole district of planters look upon him with suspicion, consider him rather a dangerous innovator, and say, that while his foolish system cannot be other than precarious to the welfare of the state, time will prove it a monster fallacy.

A happy moment was it when the time rolled round, and the morning of the day upon which Rosebrook would proclaim the freedom of his people broke serenely forth. The cabins looked bright and airy, were sanded and whitewashed, and, surrounded by their neatly attired inhabitants, presented a picturesque appearance. It was to be a great gala-day, and the bright morning atmosphere seemed propitious of the event. Daddy Daniel had got a new set of shiny brass buttons put on his long blue coat, and an extremely broad white cravat for his neck. Daniel was a sort of law-giver for the plantation, and sat in judgment over all cases brought before him, with great gravity of manner. As to his judgments, they were always pronounced with wondrous solemnity, and in accordance with what he conceived to be the most direct process of administering even-handed justice. Daddy was neither a democrat nor an unjust judge. Believing that it were better to forgive than inflict undue punishments,

PLATE VIII.



THE PLANTATION CHURCH.

"Peace reigns at Rosebrook's plantation. How vivid of happiness was the scene presented in that plantation church."

he would rather shame the transgressor, dismiss him with a firm admonition to do better, and bid him go, transgress no more !

Harry had prepared a new sermon for the eventful day ; and with it he was to make his happy flock remember the duty which they would henceforth owe to those who had been their kind protectors, as well as the promoters of that system which would result in happier days. How vivid of happiness was that scene presented in the plantation church, where master and missus, surrounded by their faithful old slaves, who, with a patriarchal attachment, seemed to view them with reverence, sat listening to the fervent discourse of that once wretene slave, now, by kindness, made a man ! Deep, soul-stirring, and affecting to tears, were the words of prayer with which that devout negro invoked the all-protecting hand of Almighty God, that he would guide master and slave through the troubles of this earthly stage, and receive them into his bosom. How in contrast with that waging of passion, and every element of evil that has its source in injustice, so rife of plantation life, was the picture here presented !

The service ended, Rosebrook addresses a few remarks to his people ; after which they gather around him and pour forth their gratitude in genial sentiments. Old and young have a " Heaven save master !" for Rosebrook, and a " God bless missus !" for his noble-hearted lady, to whom they cling, shaking her hand with warmest affection.

How enviable to her sex is the position of that woman who labours for the fallen, and whose heart yields its kindred sympathy for the oppressed.

After congratulations and tokens of affection had been exchanged, master, missus, and *the people*—for such they

now were—repaired to the green in front of the plantation mansion, where a sumptuous collation was spread out, to which all sat down in one harmonious circle. Then the festivities of the day—a 4th of July in miniature—ended with a gathering at Dad Daniel's cabin, where he profoundly laid down a system of rules for the future observance of the people.

Six months have passed under the new régime; and Rosebrook, feeling that to require labour of his people for a sum much beneath its value must in time become a source from which evil results would flow, awarded them a just and adequate remuneration, and finds it work well. Harry had not been included among those who were enrolled as candidates for the enjoyment offered by the new system; but missus as well as master had confidentially promised him he should be free before many years, and with his family, if he desired, sent to Liberia, to work for the enlightenment of his fellow Africans. Harry was not altogether satisfied that the greater amount of labour to be done by him for the unfortunate of his race was beyond the southern democratic states of America; and, with this doubt instinctively before him, he was not restless for the consummation.

Some three months after the introduction of the new state of affairs, Dad Daniel was observed to have something weighing heavily on his mind. At times he was seen consulting seriously with Harry; but of the purport of these consultations no one, except themselves, was made acquainted. That very many venerable uncles and aunts were curious to know Daddy's secret contemplations was equally evident. At length Daniel called a meeting of his more aged and sagacious brethren, and with sage face made

known his cherished project. Absalom and Uncle Cato listened with breathless suspense as the sage sayings fell from his lips. His brethren had all felt the sweet pleasures of justice, right, freedom, and kindness. "Well, den, broderin, is't 'um right in de sight ob de Lord, dat ye forgets dat broder what done so much fo' h' ye body and ye soul too?"

"No, No! dat tish't!" interrupted a dozen voices.

"Well, den!—I know'd, broderin, ye hab got da' bright spirit in ye, and wouldn't say 'twas!" Daniel continues, making a gesture with his left hand, as he raises the spectacles from his eyes with his right, and in his fervency lets them speed across the room. Daniel is only made conscious of his ecstasy when his broken eyes are returned to him. Turning to his brethren, he makes one of his very best apologies, and continues—"Dis ar poposition I'se gwine to put! And dat is, dat all ye broderin ere present put up somefin ob he arnin, and wid dat somefin, and what mas'r gib, too, we sarve dat geman what preach the gospel dat do 'em good wid 'e freedom for sef and family. Tain't right in de sight ob de Lor, nohow, to have preacher slave and congregation free: I tell ye dat, my broderin, tain't!" With these sage remarks, Daddy Daniel concluded his proposition, leaned his body forward, spread his hands, and, his wrinkled face filled with comicality, waited the unanimous response which sounded forth in rapturous medley. Each one was to put in his mite, the preacher was to have a fund made up for him, which was to be placed in the hands of missus, and when sufficiently large (master will add his mite) be handed over for the freedom of the clergyman and his family. But missus, ever generous and watchful of their interests, had

learned their intentions, and forestalled their kindness by herself setting them free, and leaving it to their own discretion to go where they will. There were many good men at the south—men whose care of their slaves constituted a bond of good faith; but they failed to carry out means for protecting the slave against the mendacity of the tyrant. None more than Harry had felt how implicated was the state for giving great power to tyrant democracy—that democracy giving him no common right under the laws of the land, unless, indeed, he could change his skin. Ardently as he was attached to the plantation and its people—much as he loved good master and missus, he would prefer a home in happy New England, a peaceful life among its liberty-loving people. To this end the Rosebrooks provided him with money, sent him to the land he had longed to live in. In Connecticut he has a neat and comfortable home, far from the cares of slave life; no bloodhounds seek him there, no cruel slave-dealer haunts his dreams. An intelligent family have grown up around him; their smiles make him happy; they welcome him as a father who will no more be torn from them and sold in a democratic slave mart. And, too, Harry is a hearty worker in the cause of freedom, preaches the gospel, and is the inventor of a system of education by which he hopes to elevate the fallen of his race. He has visited foreign lands, been listened to by dukes and nobles, and enlisted the sympathies of the lofty in the cause of the lowly. And while his appeals on behalf of his race are fervent and fiery, his expositions of the wrongs of slavery are equally fierce; but he is not ungrateful to the good master, whom he would elevate high above the cruel laws he is born and educated to observe. With gratitude and

affection does he recur to the generous Rosebrooks: he would hold them forth as an example to the slave world, and emblazon their works on the pages of history, as proof of what can be done. Bright in his eventful life, was the day, when, about to take his departure from the slave world, he bid the Rosebrooks a long, long good by. He vividly remembers how hope seemed lighting up the prospect before him—how good missus shook his hand so motherly—how kindly she spoke to Jane, and how fondly she patted his little ones on the head. “The Rosebrooks,” says our restored clergyman, “have nothing to fear save the laws of the state, which may one day make tyranny crumble beneath its own burden.”

CHAPTER XLVII.

IN WHICH THE FATE OF FRANCONIA IS SEEN.

THE reader may remember that in a former chapter we left Annette and Franconia, in company of the stranger, on board the steamer for Wilmington, swiftly gliding on her course. Four bells struck as the surging craft cleared the headlands and shaped her course. The slender invalid, so neat of figure, and whose dress exhibited so much good taste, has been suddenly transformed into a delicate girl of some seventeen summers. As night spreads its shadows over the briny scene, and the steaming craft surges onward over rolling swells, this delicate girl may be seen emerging from her cabin confines, leaning on Franconia's arm as she approaches the promenade deck. Her fawn-coloured dress, setting as neatly as it is chastelessly cut, displays a rounded form nicely compact; and, together with a drawn bonnet of green silk, simply arranged, and adding to her fair oval face an air of peculiar delicacy, present her with personal attractions of no ordinary character. And then her soft blue eyes, and her almost golden hair, hanging in thick wavy folds over her carnatic cheeks, add to the symmetry of her features that sweetness which makes modesty more fascinating. And though she has been but a slave, there is a glow of gentleness pervading her countenance, over which

a playful smile now sheds a glow of vivacity, as if awakening within her bosom new hopes of the future.

The suddenness with which they embarked served to confuse and dispel all traces of recognition; and even the stranger, as they advanced toward him, hesitated ere he greeted Annette and extended his hand. But they soon joined in conversation, promenaded and mingled with the passengers. Cautious not to enter the main cabin, they remained, supperless, on the upper deck, until near midnight. That social prejudice which acts like a crushing weight upon the slave's mind was no longer to deaden her faculties; no, she seemed like a new being, as, with childish simplicity, her soul bounded forth in rhapsody of praise and thankfulness. Holding Franconia by the hand, she would kiss her, fondle her head on her bosom, and continue to recount the pleasure she anticipated when meeting her long-lost mother. "They'll sell me no more, Franconia, will they?" she would exclaim, looking enquiringly in her face.

"No, my poor child; you won't be worth selling in a land of freedom!" Franconia would answer, jocosely. After charging Maxwell to be a father and a brother to the fugitive girl,—to remember that a double duty was to be performed in his guardianship over the being who had just escaped from slavery, they retired below, and on the following morning found themselves safely landed at Wilmington, where, after remaining about six hours, Franconia bid Annette and Maxwell adieu! saw them on their way to New York, and returned to Charleston by the same steamer.

On reaching her home, she was overjoyed at finding a letter from her parents, who, as set forth, had many years resided on the west coast of Mexico, and had amassed a considerable fortune through a connection with some mining operations. Lorenzo, on the first discovery of gold in California, having joined a marauding party who were traversing that country, was amongst the earliest who enriched themselves from its bountiful yield. They gave up their wild pursuits, and with energy and prudence stored-up their diggings, and resolved to lead a new life. With the result of one year's digging, Lorenzo repaired to St. Francisco, entered upon a lucrative business, increased his fortune, and soon became a leading man of the place. The hope that at some day he would have means wherewith to return home, wipe away the stain which blotted his character, and relieve his parents' from the troubles into which his follies had brought them, seemed like a guiding star ever before him. And then there was his generous-hearted uncle in the hands of Graspum,—that man who never lost an opportunity of enriching himself while distressing others. And now, by one of those singularities of fortune which give persons long separated a key to each other's wayfaring, Lorenzo had found out the residence of his parents on the west coast of Mexico. Yes ; he was with them, enjoying the comforts of their domicile, at the date of their letter. How happy they would be to see their Franconia, to have her with them, and once more enjoy their social re-unions so pleasantly given on brother Marston's plantation ! Numberless were the letters they had written her, but not an answer to one had been received. This had been to them a

source of great misgiving ; and as a last resource they had sent this letter enclosed to a friend, through whose kindness it reached her.

The happy intelligence brought by this letter so overjoyed Franconia that she could with difficulty restrain her feelings. Tears of gladness coursed down her cheeks, as she rested her head on Mrs. Rosebrook's bosom, saying, "Oh, how happy I am! Sweet is the forgiveness which awaits us,—strong is the hope that through darkness carries us into brighter prospects of the future." Her parents were yet alive—happy and prosperous; her brother, again an honourable man, and regretting that error which cost him many a tear, was with them. How unscrutable was the will of an all-wise Providence: but how just! To be ever sanguine, and hope for the best, is a passion none should be ashamed of, she thought. Thus elated in spirits she could not resist the temptation of seeking them out, and enjoying the comforts of their parental roof.

But we must here inform the reader that M^cCarstrow no longer acted the part of a husband towards Franconia. His conduct as a debauchee had driven her to seek shelter under the roof of Rosebrook's cottage, while he, a degraded libertine, having wasted his living among cast-out gamblers, mingled only with their despicable society. Stripped of all arts and disguises, and presented in its best form, the result of Franconia's marriage with Colonel M^cCarstrow was but one of those very many unhappy connections so characteristic of southern life.

Provided with funds which the generous Rosebrooks kindly furnished her, a fortnight after the receipt of her father's letter found her embarked on board a steamer

bound for the Isthmus, from whence she would seek her parents overland. With earnest resolution she had taken a fond leave of the Rosebrooks, and bid adieu to that home and its associations so dear to her childhood; and 'with God and happy associations her guide and her protector, was bounding over the sea. For three days the gallant ship sped swiftly onward, and the passengers, among whom she made many friends, seemed to enjoy themselves with one accord, mingling together for various amusements, spreading their social influence for the good of all, and, with elated spirits at the bright prospect, anticipating a speedy voyage. All was bright, calm, and cheering—the monster machines working smoothly, pressing the leviathan forward with curling brine at her bows, until the afternoon of the fourth day, when the wind in sharp gusts from the south-west, and the sudden falling of the barometer, admonished the mariner of the approaching heavy weather. At sunset a heavy bank in the west hung its foreboding festoons along the horizon, while light, fleecy clouds gathered over the heavens, and scud swiftly into the east. Steadily the wind increased, the sea became restless, and the sharp chops thundering at the weather bow, veering the ship from her course, rendering it necessary to keep her head a point nearer the westward, betokened a gale. To leeward were the Bahamas, their dangerous banks spreading awe among the passengers, and exciting the fears of the more timid. On the starboard bow was Key West, with its threatening and deceptive reefs, but far enough ahead to be out of danger. At midnight, the wind, which had increased to a gale, howled in threatening fierceness. Overhead, the leaden clouds hung low their massive folds, and thick

spray buried the decks and rigging ; beneath, the angry ocean spread out in resistless waves of phosphorous light, and the gallant craft surged to and fro like a thing of life on a plain of rolling fire. Now she yields to the monster wave threatening her bow, over another she rides proudly, and to a third her engines slowly rumble round, as with half-buried deck she carcens to its force. The man at the wheel, whose head we see near a glimmering light at the stern, watches anxiously for the word of command, and when received, executes it with quickness. An intruding sea has driven the look-out from the knight-heads to a post at the funnel, where, near the foremast, he clings with tenacious grip. Near him is the first officer, a veteran seaman, who has seen some twenty years' service, receiving orders from the captain, who stands at the weather quarter. Noiselessly the men proceed to execute their duties. There is not that bustle nor display of seamanship, in preparing a steamer for encountering a gale, so necessary in a sailing-ship ; and all, save the angry elements, move cautiously on. The engineer, in obedience to the captain's orders, has slowed his engines. The ship can make but little headway against the fierce sea ; but still, obedient to her command, it is thought better to maintain power just sufficient to keep her head to the sea. The captain says it is necessary, as well to ease her working as not to strain her machinery. He is supposed the better judge, and to his counsel all give ear. Now and then a more resolute passenger shoots from no one knows where, holds struggling by the jerking shroud, and, wrapt in his storm cloak, his amazed eyes, watching the scudding elements overhead, peer out upon the raging sea : then he mutters, " What an awful sight ! how madly grand with

briny light!" How sublimely terrific are the elements here combined to wage war against the craft he thought safe from their thunders! She is but a pigmy in their devouring sweep, a feeble prey at their mercy. The starboard wheel rumbles as it turns far out of water; the larboard is buried in a deep sea the ship careens into. Through the fierce drear he sees the black funnel vomiting its fiery vapour high aloft; he hears the chain braces strain and creak in its support; he is jerked from his grasp, becomes alarmed for his safety, and suddenly disappears. In the cabin he tells his fellow voyagers how the storm rages fearfully: but it needed not his word to confirm the fact: the sudden lurching, creaking of panel-work, swinging to and fro of lamps, sliding from larboard to starboard of furniture, the thumping of the sea against the ship's sides, prostrate passengers made helpless of sea sickness, uncouched and distributed about the floor, moaning females, making those not ill sick with their wailings, timid passengers in piteous accents making their lamentations in state rooms, the half-frightened waiter struggling timidly along, and the wind's mournful music as it plays through the shrouds, tell the tale but too forcibly. Hope, fear, and prayer, mingle in curious discord on board this seemingly forlorn ship on an angry sea. Franconia lies prostrate in her narrow berth, now bracing against the panels, then startled by an angry sea striking at her pillow, like death with his warning mallet announcing, "but sixteen inches separate us!"

Daylight dawns forth, much to the relief of mariners and passengers; but neither the wind nor the sea have lessened their fierceness. Slowly and steadily the engines work on; the good ship looks defiantly at each threatening sea, as it

sweeps along irresistibly; the yards have been sent down, the topmasts are struck and housed; everything that can render her easy in a sea has been stowed to the snuggest compass; but the broad ocean is spread out a sheet of raging foam. The drenched captain, his whiskers matted with saline, and his face glowing of redness (he has stood the deck all night), may be seen in the main cabin, cheering and dispelling the fears of his passengers. The storm cannot last—the wind will soon lull—the sea at meridian will be as calm as any mill-pond—he has seen a thousand worse gales; so says the mariner, who will pledge his prophecy on his twenty years' experience. But in this one instance his prophecy failed, for at noon the gale had increased to a hurricane, the ship laboured fearfully, the engines strained and worked unsteadily, while the sea at intervals made a breach of the deck. At two o'clock a more gloomy spectacle presented itself; and despondency seemed to have seized all on board, as a sharp, cone-like sea boarded the ship abaft, carried away the quarter-boats from the starboard davys, and started several stanchions. Scarcely was the work of destruction complete, when the condenser of the larboard engine gave out, rendering the machine useless, and spreading dismay among the passengers. Thus, dragging the wheel in so fearful a sea strained the ship more and more, and rendered her almost unmanageable. Again a heavy, clanking noise was heard, the steam rumbled from the funnel, thick vapour escaped from the hatchways, the starboard engine stopped, and consternation reigned triumphant, as a man in oily fustian approached the captain and announced both engines disabled. The unmanageable monster now rolled and surged at the sweep of each suc-

ceeding sea, threatening to engulf her in its sway. A piece of canvas is set in the main rigging, and her helm put hard down, in the hope of keeping her head to the wind ; but she obeys not its virtue. Suddenly she yaws off into the trough of the sea, lurches *broad on*, and ere she regains her centre, a fierce sea sweeps the house from the decks, carrying those within it into a watery grave. Shrieks and wailings for a moment mingle their painful discord with the murmuring wind, and all is buried in the roar of elements. By bracing the fore-yard hard-a-starboard the unwieldy wreck is got before the wind ; but the smoke-funnel has followed the house, and so complete is the work of demolition that it is with difficulty she can be kept afloat. Those who were in the main, or lower cabin, startled at the sudden crash which had removed the house above, and leaving the passages open, exposing them to the rushing water that invaded their state-rooms, seek the deck, where a more dismal sight is presented in the fragments of wreck spread from night-head to taffrail. The anxious captain, having descended from the upper deck a few minutes before the dire calamity, is saved to his passengers, with whom and his men he labours to make safe what remains of his noble ship. Now more at ease in the sea, with canvas brought from the store-rooms, are the hatches and companions battened down, the splintered stanchions cleared away, and extra pumps prepared for clearing the water fast gaining in the lower hold. Lumbering moves the heavy mass over the mounting surge ; but a serious leak having sprung in the bow, consternation and alarm seem on the point of adding to the sources of danger. "Coolness is our safeguard," says the captain. Indeed,

the exercise of that all-important virtue when destruction threatens would have saved thousands from watery graves.

His admonition was heeded,—all worked cheerfully, and for some time the water was kept within bounds of subjection. As night approached the sea became calmer, a bright streak gleamed along the western horizon; hearts that had sorrowed gladdened with joy, as the murky clouds overhead chased quickly into the east and dissolved, and the blue arch of heaven—hung with pearly stars of hope—shed its peaceful glows over the murmuring sea.

Again the night was passed in incessant labour of pumping and clearing up the dismantled hull; but when daylight appeared, the wind having veered and increased, the sea ran in short swells, rocking the unwieldy hull, and fearfully straining every timber in its frame. The leak now increased rapidly, as also did the water in the hold, now beyond their exertions to clear. At ten o'clock all hopes of keeping the wreck afloat had disappeared; and the last alternative of a watery grave, or launching upon the broad ocean, presented its stern terms for their acceptance. A council decided to adopt the latter, when, as the hulk began to settle in the sea, and with no little danger of swamping, boats were launched, supplied with such stores as were at hand, the passengers and crew embarked, and the frail barks sent away with their hapless freight to seek a haven of safety. The leviathan hulk soon disappeared from sight. Franconia, with twenty-five fellow unfortunates, five of whom were females, had embarked in the mate's boat, which now shaped her course for Nassau, the wind having veered into the north-west, and that seeming the nearest and most available point. The clothing they stood in was all they

saved ; but with that readiness to protect the female, so characteristic and noble of the sailor, the mate and his men lightened the sufferings of the women by giving them a portion of their own : incasing them with their jackets and fearnoughts, they would shield them from the night chill. For five days were sufferings endured without a murmur that can only be appreciated by those who have passed through shipwreck, or, tossed upon the ocean in an open boat, been left to stare in the face grim hunger and death. At noonday they sighted land ahead ; and as each eager eye strained for the welcome sight, it seemed rising from the ocean in a dim line of haze. Slowly, as they neared, did it come bolder and bolder to view, until it shone out a long belt of white panoramic banks. Low, and to the unpractised eye deceptive of distance, the mate pronounced it not many miles off, and, the wind freshening fair, kept the little bark steadily on her course, hoping thereby to gain it before night came on : but the sun sank in a heavy cloud when yet some four miles intervened. Distinctly they saw a cluster of houses on a projecting point nearly ahead ; but not a sail was off shore, to which the increasing wind was driving them with great violence.

And now that object which had been sighted with so much welcome in the morning—that had cheered many a drooping heart, and seemed a haven of safety, threatened their destruction. The water shoaled ; the sea broke and surged in sharp cones ; the little craft tipped and yawed confusedly ; the counter eddies twirled and whirled in foaming concaves ; and leaden clouds again hung their threatening festoons over the awful sea. To lay her head to the sea was impracticable—an attempt to “ lay-to ” under

the little sail would be madness ; onward she rode, hurrying to an inevitable fate. Onward she swept through the white crests, as the wind murmured and the sea roared, and the anxious countenance of the mate, still guiding the craft with a steady hand, seemed masked in watchfulness. His hand remained firm to the helm, his eyes peered into the black prospect ahead : but not a word did he utter.

It was near ten o'clock, when a noise as of thunder rolling in the distance, and re-echoing in booming accents, broke fearfully upon their ears. The sea, every moment threatening to engulf the little craft, to sweep its freight of human beings into eternity, and to seal for ever all traces of their fate, was now the lesser enemy. Not a word had escaped the lips of a being on board for several minutes ; all seemed resigned to whatever fate Providence awarded.

“ The beach roars, Mr. Slade—”

The mate interrupted before the seaman in the sheets had time to finish his sentence : “ I have not been deaf to the breakers ; but there is no hope for us but upon the beach ; and may heaven save us there ! Passengers, be calm ! let me enjoin you to remain firm to your places, and, if it be God's will that we strike, the curling surf may be our deliverer. If it carry you to the sand in its sweep, press quickly and resolutely forward, lest it drag you back in its grasp, and bury you beneath its angry surge. Be firm, and hope for the best !” he said, with great firmness. The man who first spoke sat near Franconia, and during the five days they had been in the boat exhibited great sympathy and kindness of heart. He had served her with food, and, though a common sailor, displayed those traits of tenderness for the suffering which it were well if those in higher

spheres of life did but imitate. As the mate ceased speaking, the man took his pilot coat from his shoulder and placed it about Franconia's, saying, "I will save this lady, or die with her in the very same sea."

"That's well done, Mr. Higgins! (for such was the man's name). Let the hardiest not forget the females who have shown so much fortitude under trying circumstances; let the strong not forget the weak, but all save who can," returned the mate, as he scanned through the stormy elements ahead, in the hope of catching a glimpse of the point.

Drenched with the briny spray that swept over the little bark, never did woman exhibit fortitude more resolute. Franconia thanked the man for his solicitude, laid her hand nervously upon his arm, and, through the dark, watched his countenance as if her fate was in its changes.

The din and murmur of the surf now rose high above the wail of the sea. Fearful and gloomy, a fretted shore stood out before them, extending from a bold jut on the starboard hand away into the darkness on the left. Beneath it the angry surf beat and lashed against the beach in a sheet of white foam, roaring in dismal cadences.

"Hadh't you better put her *broad on*, Mr. Slade?" enquired the young seaman, peering along the line of surf that bordered the shore with its deluging bank.

"Ask no questions!" returned the mate, in a firm voice: "Act to the moment, when she strikes—I will act until then." At the moment a terrific rumbling broke forth; the din of elements seemed in battle conflict; the little

bark—as if by some unforeseen force—swept through the lashing surge, over a high curling wave, and with a fearful crash lay buried in the boiling sand. Agonising shrieks sounded amid the rage of elements ; and then fainter and fainter they died away on the wind's murmurs. Another moment, and the young sailor might have been seen, Franconia's slender form in his arms, struggling against the devouring surf ; but how vain against the fierce monster were his noble efforts ! The receding surge swept them far from the shore, and buried them in its folds,—a watery grave received the fair form of one whose life of love had been spotless, just, and holy. The white wave was her winding-sheet,—the wind sang a requiem over her watery grave,—and a just God received her spirit, and enthroned it high among the angels.

Of the twenty-seven who embarked in the little craft, but two gained the beach, where they stood drenched and forlorn, as if contemplating the raging surf that had but a minute before swallowed up their fellow voyagers. The boat had driven on a flat sandy beach some two miles from the point on which stood the cluster of dwellings before described ; and from which two bright lights glimmered, like beacons to guide the forlorn mariner. For them, the escaped men—one a passenger, the other a seaman—shaped their course, wet, and sad at heart.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

IN WHICH IS A SAD RECOGNITION.

THE mate did not mistake his position, for the jut of land we described in the last chapter is but a few hours' ride from Nassau, and the houses are inhabited by wreckers. With desponding hearts did our unfortunates approach one of the rude cabins, from the window of which a faint light glimmered, and hesitate at the door, as if doubting the reception they were about to receive. The roaring of the beach, and the sharp whistling of the wind, as in clouds it scattered the sand through the air, drowned what sound might otherwise be heard from within. "This cabin seems deserted," says one, as he taps on the door a second time. "No, that cannot be!" returns the other, peering through a small window into the barrack-like room. It was from this window the light shone, and, being a bleak November night, a wood fire blazed on the great hearth, shedding its lurid glows over everything around. It is the pale, saline light of wreckwood. A large binnacle lamp, of copper, hung from the centre of the ceiling, its murky light mingling in curious contrast to the pale shadows of the wreckwood fire. Rude chains, and chests, and boxes, and ropes, and canvas, and broken bolts of copper, and pieces of valuable wood, and various nautical relics—all indicating the trade of shipwreck, lie or stand promiscuously

about the room; while in the centre is a table surrounded by chairs, some of which are turned aside, as if the occupants had just left. Again, there may be seen hanging from the unplastered walls numerous teeth of fish, bones and jaws of sharks, fins and flukes of curious species, heads of the Floridian mamalukes, and preserved dolphins—all interspersed here and there with coloured prints, illustrative of Jack's leaving or returning to his favourite Mary, with a lingering farewell or fond embrace.

Louder and louder, assured of some living being within, they knock at the door, until a hoarse voice rather roars than speaks—"Aye, aye! hold hard a bit! Ise bearin' a hand!" The sound came as if from the clouds, for not a living being was visible. A pause followed; then suddenly a pair of dingy legs and feet descended from a small opening above the window, which, until that moment, had escaped their notice. The sight was, indeed, not the most encouraging to weak nerves. Clumsily lowered the legs, the feet making a ladder of cleets of wood nailed to the window, until the burly figure of the wrecker, encased with red shirt and blue trousers, stood out full to view. Over his head stood bristly hair in jagged tufts; and as he drew his brawny hand over the broad disc of his sun-scorched face, winking and twisting his eyes in the glare, there stood boldly outlined on his features the index of his profession. He shrugged his shoulders, gathered his nether garments quickly about him, paused as if half confused and half overjoyed, then ran to the fire-place, threw into a heap the charred wood with a long wooden poker, and sought the door, saying—"Avast heavin a bit, Tom!" Having removed a wooden bar, he stands in the opening,

braving out the storm. "A screachin nor'-easter this, Tom—what'r ye sighted away, eh!" he concludes. He is (to use a vulgar term) aghast with surprise. It was Tom Dasher's watch to-night; but no Tom stands before him. "Hallo!—From whence came you?" he enquires of the stranger, with an air of anxious surprise. He bids them come in, for the wind carries the sand rushing into his domicile.

"We are shipwrecked men in distress," says the passenger—the wrecker, with an air of kindness, motioning them to sit down: "Our party have been swallowed up in the surf a short distance below, and we are the only survivors here seeking shelter——"

"Zounds you say—God be merciful!" interrupts the hardy wrecker, ere the stranger had time to finish his sentence. "It was Tom's look-out to-night. Its al'as the way wi' him—he gits turned in, and sleeps as niver a body see'd, and when time comes to unbunk himself, one didn't know whether 'ts wind or Tom's snoarin cracks hardest. Well, well,—God help us! Think ye now, if wife and I didn't, in a half sort of dream, fancy folks murmuring and crying on the beach about twelve, say. But the wind and the surf kept up such a piping, and Tom said ther war nought a seght at sundown." With a warm expression of good intention did our hardy host set about the preparing something to cheer their drooping spirits. "Be at home there wi' me," says he; "and if things b'nt as fine as they might be, remember we're poor folks, and have many a hard knock on the reefs for what we drag out. Excuse the bits o' things ye may see about; and wife 'll be down in a flip and do the vary best she can fo'h ye." He had a warm heart

concealed beneath that rough enamel ; he had long followed the daring profession, seen much suffering, lightened many a sorrowing heart. Bustling about among old boxes and bags, he soon drew forth a lot of blankets and quilts, which he spread upon the broad brick hearth, at the same time keeping up a series of questions they found difficult to answer, so rapidly were they put. They had indeed fallen into the hands of a good Samaritan, who would dress their wounds with his best balm.

“An’ now I tak it ye must be famished ; so my old woman must get up an’ help mak ye comfortable,” says he, bringing forth a black tea-kettle, and filling it from a pail that stood on a shelf near the fire-frame. He will hang it on the fire. He had no need of calling the good dame ; for as suddenly as mysteriously does the chubby figure of a motherly-looking female of some forty years shoot from the before described opening, and greeting the strangers with a hearty welcome, set about preparing something to relieve their exhaustion. A single smile pervades her little red face, so simply expressive her peaked cap shines so brightly in contrast with the black ribbon with which she secures it under her mole-bedecked chin ; and her short homespun frock sets so comely, showing her thick knit stockings, and her feet well protected in cufskin laces, with heels a trooper might not despise ; and then, she spreads her little table with a heartiness that adds its value to simple goodness,—her invitingly clean cups and saucers, and knives and forks, as she spreads them, look so cheerful. The kettle begins to sing, and the steam fumes from the spout, and the hardy wrecker brings his bottle of old Jamaica, and his sugar ; and such a bowl of hot punch was never made

before. "Come now," he says, "ye're in my little place; the wrecker as don't make the distressed comfortable aneath his ruf 's a disgrace to the craft." And now he hands each a mug of steaming punch, which they welcomely receive, a glow of satisfaction bespredding his face, telling with what sincerity he gives it. Ere they commenced sipping, the good dame brought pilot bread and set it before them; and while she returned to preparing her supper the wrecker draws his wooden seat by their side, and with ears attentive listens to the passenger as he recites the disaster.

"Only two out of twenty-seven saved—a sorry place that gulf!" he exclaims; "you bear away, wife. Ah, many a good body's bones, too, have whitened the beach beside us; many 's the bold fellow has been dashed upon it to die unknown," he continues, with serious face. "And war ner ounny weimen amang ye, good man?" interposes the good dame.

"Seven; they have all passed into eternity!" rejoins the seaman, who, till then, had been a mute looker-on.

"Puer souls! how they mun' 'ave suffered!" she sighs, shaking her head, and leaning against the great fire frame, as her eyes fill with tears. The wrecker must needs acquaint Tom Dasher, bring him to his aid, and, though the storm yet rages, go search the beating surf where roll the unfortunates. Nay, the good dame will herself execute the errand of mercy, while he supplies the strangers with dry clothes; she will bring Tom hither. She fears not the tempest while her soul warms to do good; she will comfort the distressed who seek shelter under her roof. With the best his rough wardrobe affords does the wrecker clothe them,

while his good wife, getting Tom up, relates her story, and hastens back with him to her domicile. Tom is an intrepid seafarer, has spent some seven years wrecking, saved many a life from the grasp of the grand Bahama, and laid up a good bit of money lest some stormy day may overtake him and make the wife a widow.

"This is a hard case, Stores!" says Tom, addressing himself to our wrecker, as with sharp, hairy face, and keen black eyes, his countenance assumes great seriousness. Giving his sou'-wester a cant back on his head, running his left hand deep into the pocket of his pea-jacket, and supplying his mouth with tobacco from his right, he stands his tall figure carelessly before the fire, and in a contemplative mood remains silent for a few minutes.

"Aye, but somethin' mun' be done, Tom," says the first wrecker, breaking silence.

"Yes; as my name is Tom Dasher, there must. We must go to the beach, and see what it's turned up,—what there is to be seen, an' the like o' that." Then, turning to the strangers, he continued, "Pity yer skipper hadn't a headed her two points further suthard, rounded the point just above here a bit, and made a lee under the bend. Our craft lies there now,—as snug as Tompkins' wife in her chamber!"

"Yes, but, Tom! ye dinna think as the poor folks could know all things," speaks up the woman, as Tom was about to add a few items more, merely to give the strangers some evidence of his skill.

"Aye, aye,—all right; I didn't get the balance on't just then," returned Tom, nodding his head with an air of satisfaction.

A nice supper of broiled fish, and toast, and tea, and hot rum punch—(of which Tom helped himself without stint)—was set out, the strangers invited to draw up, and all partook of the plain but cheering fare. As daylight was fast approaching, the two wreckers dispatched their meal before the others, and sought the spot on the beach described as where the fatal wreck took place, while the good dame put the shipwrecked to sleep in the attic, and covered them with her warmest rugs and blankets.

Not a vestige of the wreck was to be seen—not a fragment to mark the spot where but a few hours before twenty-five souls were hurried into eternity. They stood and stood, scanning over the angry ocean into the gloom: nothing save the wail of the wind and the sea's roar greeted their ears. Tom Dasher thinks either they have been borne out into the fathomless caves, or the men are knaves with false stories in their mouths.

Stores, (for such is our good man's name) turning from the spot, says daylight will disclose a different scene; with the wind as it is the bodies will be drawn into the eddy on the point, and thrown ashore by the under-current, for burial. "Poor creatures! there's no help for them now;" he adds, sighing, as they wend their way back to the cabin, where the good dame waits their coming. Their search was in vain; having no news to bring her, she must be contented until morning. If the bodies wash ashore, the good woman of the Humane Society will come down from the town, and see them decently buried. Stores has several times spoken of this good woman; were she a ministering angel he could not speak of her name with more reverence. For years, he tells us, has she been a harbinger of good,

ever relieving the sick and needy, cheering the downcast, protecting the unfortunate. Her name has become a symbol of compassion; she mingles with the richest and the poorest, and none know her but to love and esteem her. "And she, too, is an American lady!" Stores says, exultingly. And to judge from his praise, we should say, if her many noble deeds were recorded on fair marble, it would not add one jot to that impression of her goodness made on the hearts of the people among whom she lives.

"Ah, man! she's a good woman, and everybody loves and looks up to her. And she's worth loving, too, because she's so kind," adds the good dame, significantly canting her head.

Daylight was now breaking in the east, and as there seemed no chance of making a search on the bank that day, such was the fierceness of the wind, the two men drank again of the punch, spread their blankets before the fire, lay their hardy figures down, and were soon in a profound sleep. The woman, more watchful, coiled herself in a corner of the room on some sail cloth, but did not sleep.

At ten o'clock they were aroused by the neighbours, who, in great anxiety, had come to inform them of an event they were already conscious of,—adding, however, as an evidence of what had taken place, that sixteen male and three female bodies, borne to the *rips* at the point, had been thrown upon the shore. The denizens of the point were indeed in a state of excitement; a messenger had been sent into the town for the coroner, which said functionary soon spread the news about, creating no little commotion among the inhabitants, many of whom repaired to the scene of the disaster.

When it became known that two witnesses to the dire misfortune had been spared to tell the tale, and were, now at Stores' house, the excitement calmed into sympathy. The wrecker's little village resounded with curious enquiries, and few were they who would be satisfied without a recital of the sad tale by the rescued men.

Carefully they brought the dead bodies from the shore, and laid them in an untenanted house, to await the coroner's order. Among them was the slender form of Franconia, the dark dress in which she was clad but little torn, and the rings yet remaining on her fingers. "How with fortitude she bore the suffering!" said the rescued passenger, gazing on her blanched features as she laid her on the floor: the wrecker's wife covered her with a white sheet, and spread a pillow carefully beneath her head.

"Yes!" returns the unfortunate seaman, who stood by his side, "she seemed of great goodness and gentleness. She said nothing, bore everything without a murmur; she was Higgins' pet; and I'll lay he died trying to save her, for never a braver fellow than Jack Higgins stood trick at a wheel.

The coroner arrives as the last corpse is brought from the sand: he holds his brief inquest, orders them buried, and retires. Soon, three ladies, (Stores' wife tells us they are of the Humane Society), make their appearance in search of the deceased. They enter Stores' house, greet his good dame familiarly, and remain seated while she relates what has happened. One of the three is tall and stately of figure, and dressed with that quiet taste so becoming a lady. And while to the less observing eye no visible superiority over the others is discernible, it is evident they view her in such a light,

always yielding to her counsels. Beneath a silk bonnet trimmed with great neatness, is disclosed a finely oval face, glowing with features of great regularity, large dark eyes of great softness, and silky hair, laid in heavy wavy folds across a beautifully arched brow—to which is added a sweet smile that ever and anon plays over her slightly olive countenance. There, boldly outlined, is the unmistakeable guide to a frank and gentle nature. For several minutes does she listen to the honest woman's recital of the sad event, which is suspended by the passenger making his appearance. The wrecker's wife introduces him by motioning her hand, and saying, "This is the good lady of whose goodness I spoke so last night." Anxiously does she gather from the stranger each and every incident of the voyage: this done, she will go to the house where lay the dead, our good Dame Stores leading the way, talking from the very honesty of her heart the while. In a small dilapidated dwelling on the bleak sands, the dead lay. Children and old men linger about the door,—now they make strange mutterings, and walk away, as if in fear. Our messengers of mercy have entered the abode of the dead. The wrecker's wife says, "They are to be buried to-morrow, ma'am;" while the lady, with singular firmness, glances her eye along the row of male bodies, counting them one by one. She has brought shrouds, in which to bury them like Christians.

"Them three females is here, ma'am," says Dame Stores, touching the lady on the elbow, as she proceeds to uncover the bodies. The passenger did, indeed, tell our Lady of Mercy there was one handsome lady from Carolina. One by one she views their blanched and besanded features.

"A bonny figure that, mum; I lay she's bin a handsome

in her day," with honest simplicity remarks Dame Stores, as, bent over the lifeless body of Franconia, she turns back the sheet, carefully. "Yes," is the quick reply: the philanthropic woman's keen eye scans along the body from head to foot. Dame Stores will part the silken hair from off that cold brow, and smooth it with her hand. Suddenly our lady's eyes dart forth anxiety; she recognises some familiar feature, and trembles. The rescued seaman had been quietly viewing the bodies, as if to distinguish their different persons, when a wrecker, who had assisted in removing the bodies, entered the room and approached him. "Ah!" exclaims the seaman, suddenly, "yonder's poor Jack Higgins." He points to a besanded body at the right, the arms torn and bent partly over the breast, adding, "Jack had a good heart, he had." Turning half round, the wrecker replies, "That 'un had this 'un fast grappled in his, arms; it was a time afore we got 'un apart."

"Was it this body?" enquires the lady, looking at the lifeless form before her. He says, "That same, ma'am: an' it looked as if he had tried to save the slender woman." He points to the body Dame Stores has just uncovered. The good lady kneels over the body: her face suddenly becomes pale; her lips purple and quiver; she seems sinking with nervous excitement, as tremulously she seizes the blanched hand in her own. Cold and frigid, it will not yield to her touch. "That face—those brows, those pearly teeth, those lips so delicate,—those hands,—those deathless emblems! how like Franconia they seem," she ejaculates frantically, the bystanders looking on with surprise. "And are they not my Franconia's—my dear deliverer's?" she continues. She smooths the cold hands, and chafes them in

her own. The rings thereon were a present from Marston. "Those features like unto chiselled marble are hers; I am not deceived; no! oh no! it cannot be a dream (in sorrow she shakes her head as the tears begin to moisten her cheeks), she received my letter, and was on her way seeking me." Again she smooths and smooths her left hand over those pallid cheeks, her right still pressing the cold hand of the corpse, as her emotions burst forth in agonising sobs.

The wrecker's wife loosens the dress from about deceased's neck,—bares that bosom once so fair and beautiful. A small locket, attached to a plain black necklace, lies upon it, like a moat on a snowy surface. Nervously does the good woman grasp it, and opening it behold a miniature of Marston, a facsimile of which is in her own possession. "Somethin' more 'ere, mum," says Dame Stores, drawing from beneath a lace stomacher the lap of her chemise, on which is written in indelible ink—"Franconia M'Carstrow." The doubt no longer lent its aid to hope; the lady's sorrowing heart can no longer withstand the shock. Weeping tears of anguish, she says, "May the God of all goodness preserve her pure spirit, for it is my Franconia! she who was my saviour; she it was who snatched me from death, and put my feet on the dry land of freedom, and gave me—ah, me!" she shrieked,—and fell swooning over the lifeless body, ere Dame Stores had time to clasp her in her arms.

My reader can scarcely have failed to recognise in this messenger of mercy,—this good woman who had so ennobled herself by seeking the sufferer and relieving his wants, and who makes light the cares of the lowly, the person of that slave-mother, Clotilda. Having drunk of the bitterness of

slavery, she the more earnestly cheers the desponding. That lifeless form, once so bright of beauty, so buoyant of heart and joyous of spirit, is Franconia; she it was who delivered the slave-mother from the yoke of bondage, set her feet on freedom's heights, and on her head invoked its genial offspring. Her soul had yearned for the slave's good; she had been a mother to Annette, and dared snatch her from him who made the slave a wretch,—democracy his boast! It was Franconia who placed the miniature of Marston about Clotilda's neck on the night she effected her escape,—bid her God speed into freedom. All that once so abounded in goodness now lies cold in death. Eternity has closed her lips with its strong seal,—no longer shall her soul be harassed with the wrongs of a slave world: no! her pure spirit has ascended among the angels.

We will not longer pain the reader's feelings with details of this sad recognition, but inform him that the body was removed to Clotilda's peaceful habitation, from whence, with becoming ceremony, it was buried on the following day. A small marble tablet, standing in a sequestered churchyard near the outskirts of Nassau, and on which the traveller may read these simple words:—“*Franconia, my friend, lies here!*” over which, in a circle, is chiselled the figure of an angel descending, and beneath, “*How Happy in Heaven are the Good!*” marks the spot where her ashes rest in peace.

CHAPTER XLIX.

IN WHICH A DANGEROUS PRINCIPLE IS ILLUSTRATED.

SHOULD the sagacious reader be disappointed in our hero Nicholas, who, instead of being represented as a model of disinterestedness, perilling his life to save others, sacrificing his own interests for the cause of liberty, and wasting on hardened mankind all those amiable qualities which belong only to angels (but with which heroes are generally invested for the happy purpose of pleasing the lover of romance) has evinced little else than an unbending will, he will find a palliation in that condition of life to which his oppressors have forced him to submit. Had Nicholas enjoyed his liberty, many incidents of a purely disinterested character might have been recorded to his fame, for indeed he had noble traits. That we have not put fiery words into his mouth, with which to execrate the tyrant, while invoking the vengeance of heaven—and, too, that we are guilty of the crime of thus suddenly transferring him from boyhood to manhood, nor have hanged him to please the envious and vicious,—will find excuse with the indulgent reader, who will be kind enough to consider that it is our business to relate facts as they are, to the performance of which (unthankful though it may be) we have drawn from the abundance of material placed in our hand by the southern world. We may misname characters and transpose

scenes, but southern manners and customs we have transcribed from nature, to which stern book we have religiously adhered. And, too (if my reader will pardon the digression), though we never have agreed with our very best admirers of the gallows, some of whom hold it a means of correcting morals — nor, are yet ready to yield assent to the opinions of the many, so popularly laid down in favour of what we consider a medium of very unwholesome influence, we readily admit the existence of many persons who have well merited a very good hanging. But, were the same rules of evidence admissible in a court of law when a thief is on trial, applied against the practice of “publicly hanging,” there would be little difficulty in convicting it of inciting to crime. Not only does the problem of complex philosophy (the reader may make the philosophy to suit his taste) presented in the contrariety of scenes on and about the gallows offer something irreconcilable to ordinary minds but gives to the humorous large means with which to feast their love of the ludicrous. On the scaffold of destruction, our good brothers of the clergy would, pointing to the “awful example,” assure the motley assembly gathered beneath, that he hath purified that soul, which will surely be accepted in heaven; but, he can in no wise condescend to let it, still directing the flesh, live on the less pure platform of earth. With eager eyes, the mass beneath him, their morbid appetites curiously distended, heed not the good admonition; nay, the curious wait in breathless suspense the launching a human being into eternity; the vicious are busy in crime the while; the heedless make gay the holiday. Sum up the invention and perpetration of crime beneath the gallows on one of those singular gala-days, and the culprit expiating his guilt at

the rope's end, as an "awful warning," will indeed have disclosed a shallow mockery. Taking this view of the hanging question, though we would deprive no man of his enjoyment, we deem it highly improper that our hero should die by any other means than that which the chivalrous sons of the south declared "actually necessary."

But before proceeding further with Nicholas, it may be proper here to state that Annette and the stranger, in whose hands we left her, have arrived safe at New York. Maxwell (for such is his name) is with his uncle engaged in a lucrative commercial business; while Annette, for reasons we shall hereafter explain, instead of forthwith seeking the arms of an affectionate mother, is being educated at a female seminary in a village situated on the left bank of the Hudson River.

In returning to Nicholas, the reader will remember that Grabguy was something of a philosopher, the all-important functions of which medium he invoked on the occasion of his ejection from Fetter's court, for an interference which might at that moment have been taken as evidence of repentance. The truth, however, was, that Grabguy, in the exercise of his philosophy, found the cash value of his slave about to be obliterated by the carrying out of Fetter's awful sentence. Here there rose that strange complexity which the physical action and mental force of slave property, acting in contrariety, so often produces. The physical of the slave was very valuable, and could be made yield; but the mental being all powerful to oppose, completely annulled the monetary worth. But by allowing the lacerations to heal, sending him to New Orleans, and making a positive sale, some thousand or twelve hundred dollars might be saved;

whereas, did Fetter's judgment take effect, Mr. Grabguy must content himself with the state's more humble award of two hundred dollars, less the trouble of getting. In this democratic perplexity did our economical alderman find himself placed, when, again invoking his philosophy (not in virtue of any sympathetic admonition, for sympathy was not of Grabguy), he soon found means of protecting his interests. To this end he sought and obtained an order from the Court of Appeals, which grave judiciary, after duly considering the evidence on which the criminal was convicted before Fetter's tribunal, was of opinion that evidence had been improperly extorted by cruelty; and, in accordance with that opinion, ordered a new trial, which said trial would be dististinguished above that at Fetter's court by being presided over by a *judicial* magistrate. This distinguished functionary, the judicial magistrate, who generally hears the appeals from Fetter's court, is a man of the name of Fairweather Fuddle, a clever wag, whose great good-nature is only equalled by the rotundity of his person, which is not a bad portraiture of our much-abused Sir John Falstaff, as represented by the heavy men of our country theatres. Now, to enter upon an analysis of the vast difference between Fetter's court in ordinary, and Fuddle's court in judiciary, would require the aid of more philosophy than we are capable of summoning; nor would the sagacious reader be enlightened thereby, inasmuch as the learned of our own atmosphere have spent much study on the question without arriving at any favourable result. Very low people, and intelligent negroes (whose simple mode of solving difficult problems frequently produces results nearest of truth) do say without fear or trembling

that the distinction between these great courts exists in the fact of Justice Fuddle drinking the more perfect brandy. Now, whether the quality of brandy has anything to do with the purity of ideas, the character of the judiciary, or the tempering of the sentences, we will leave to the reader's discrimination; but true it is, that, while Fetter's judgments are always for the state, Fuddle leans to mercy and the master's interests. Again, were Fuddle to evince that partiality for the gallows which has become a trait of character with his legal brother, it would avail him nothing, inasmuch as by confirming Fetter's judgments the fees would alike remain that gentleman's. If, then, the reader reason on the philosophy of self-interest, he may find the fees, which are in no wise small, founding the great distinction between the courts of Messrs. Fuddle and Fetter; for by reversing Fetter's judgments fees accrue to Fuddle's own court, and belong to his own well-lined pocket; whereas, did he confirm them, not one cent of fees could he claim. The state should without delay remedy this great wrong, and give its judicial gentlemen a fair chance of proving their judgments well founded in contrariety. We should not, forsooth, forget to mention that Fuddle, in his love of decorum—though he scarce ever sat in judgment without absorbing his punch the while—never permitted in his forum the use of those knock-down arguments which were always a prelude to Fetter's judgments.

Before Fuddle's court, then, Grabguay has succeeded in getting a hearing for his convicted property, still mentally obstinate. Not the least doubt has he of procuring a judgment tempered by mercy; for, having well drunk Fuddle on the previous night, and improved the oppor-

tunity for completely winning his distinguished consideration, he has not the slightest apprehension of being many months deprived of his property merely to satisfy injured justice. And, too, the evidence upon which Nicholas was convicted in Fetter's court, of an attempt to create an insurrection (the most fatal charge against him) was so imperfect that the means of overthrowing it can be purchased of any of the attendant constables for a mere trifle,—oaths with such fellows being worth about sixty-two and a half cents each.

If the reader will be pleased to fancy the trial before Fetter's tribunal (before described), with the knock-down arguments omitted, he will have a pretty clear idea of that now proceeding before Fuddle's; and having such will excuse our entering into details. Having heard the case with most learned patience, the virtue of which has been well sustained by goodly potions of Paul and Brown's perfect "London Dock," Fuddle, with grave deportment, receives from the hands of the clerical-looking clerk (a broken-down gentleman of great legal ability) the charge he is about to make the jury. "Gentlemen," he says, "I might, without any detriment to perfect impunity, place the very highest encomiums on the capabilities displayed in the seriousness you have given to this all-important case, in which the state has such deep and constitutional interests; but that I need not do here. The state having placed in my possession such responsible functions, no one more than me can feel the importance of the position; and which position has always been made the judicial medium of equity and mercy. I hold moderation to be the essential part of the judiciary, gentlemen! And

here I would say (Fuddle directs himself to his gentlemanly five) and your intelligence will bear me out in the statement, that the trial below seems to have been in error from beginning to end. I say this—understand, gentlemen!—with all deference to my learned brother, Fetter, whose judgments, in the exercise of the powers in me invested, and with that respect for legal equity by which this court is distinguished, it has become me so often to reverse. On the charge of creating an insurrection (rather an absurdity, by the way) you must discharge the prisoner, there being no valid proof; whereas the charge of maiming or raising his hand to a white man, though clearly proved, and according to the statutes a capital offence, could not in the spirit of mercy which now prevails in our judiciary—and, here, let me say, which is emulated by that high state of civilisation for which the people of this state are distinguished—be carried rigidly into effect. There is only this one point, then, of maiming a white gentleman, with intention —— Ah! yes (a pause) the intention the court thinks it as well not to mind! open to you for a conviction. Upon this point you will render your verdict, guilty; only adding a recommendation to the mercy of the court.” With this admonition, our august Mr. Fuddle, his face glowing of importance, sits down to his mixture of Paul and Brown’s best. A few moments’ pause (during which Fetter enters looking very anxious) and the jury have made up their verdict, which they submit on a slip of paper to the clerk, who in turn presents it to Fuddle. That functionary being busily engaged with his punch, is made conscious of the document waiting his pleasure by the audience bursting into a roar of laughter at the comical picture presented, in

the earnestness with which he regards his punch (some of which is streaming into his bosom) and disregards the paper held for some minutes in the clerk's hand, which is in close proximity with his nasal organ. Starting suddenly, he lets the goblet fall to the floor, his face flushing like a broad moon in harvest-time, takes the paper in his fingers with a bow, making three of the same nature to his audience, as Fetter looks over the circular railing in front of the dock, his face wearing a facetious smile. "Nigger boy will clear away the break,—prisoner at the bar will stand up for the sentence, and the attending constable will reduce order!" speaks Fuddle, relieving his pocket of a red kerchief with which he will wipe his capacious mouth. These requests being complied with, he continues (having adjusted his glasses most learnedly), making a gesture with his right hand—"I hold in my hand the solemn verdict of an intelligent jury, who, after worthy and most mature deliberation, find the prisoner at the bar, Nicholas Grabguy, guilty of the heinous offence of raising his hand to a white man, whom he severely maimed with a sharp-edged tool; and the jury in their wisdom, recognising the fact of their verdict involving capital punishment, have, in the exercise of that enlightened spirit which is inseparable from our age, recommended him to the mercy of this court, and, in the discretion of that power in me invested, I shall now pronounce sentence." Prepare, then, ye lovers of civilisation, ye friends of humanity, ye who would temper the laws of our land of freedom to the circumstance of offences—prepare, I say, to have your ears and hearts made glad over the swelling sound of this most enlightened sentence of a court, where judgments are tempered with mercy. Our hero, a chain hanging loosely

from his left arm, stands forward in the dock, his manly deportment evincing a stern resolution to meet his fate unsubdued. Fuddle continues:—"There is no appeal from this court! (he forgot the court of a brighter world) and in reversing the decision of the court below, I sentence the prisoner to four years' imprisonment with hard labour, two months' solitary confinement in each year, and thirty blows with the paddle, on the first day of each month until the expiration of the sentence." Such, reader, was Fuddle's merciful sentence upon one whose only crime was a love of freedom and justice. Nicholas bowed to the sentence; Mr. Grabguy expressed surprise, but no further appeal on earth was open to him; Squire Fetter laughed immeasurably; and the officer led his victim away to the place of durance vile.

To this prison, then, must we go with our hero. In this magnificent establishment, its princely exterior seeming like a modern fort with frowning bastions, are some four hundred souls for sale and punishment. Among them Nicholas is initiated, having, for the time being, received his first instalment of blows, and takes his first lesson in the act of breaking stone, which profession is exclusively reserved for criminals of his class. Among the notable characters connected with this establishment is Philip Fladge, the wily superintendent, whose power over the criminals is next to absolute. Nicholas has been under Philip's guardianship but a few months, when it is found that he may be turned into an investment which will require only the outlay of kindness and amelioration on his part to become extremely profitable. Forthwith a convention is entered into, the high contracting parties being Nicholas and himself. Mr.

Fladge stipulates on his part that the said Nicholas, condemned by Fairweather Fuddle's court to such punishments as are set forth in the calendar, shall be exempt from all such punishments, have the free use of the yard, comfortable apartments to live in, and be invested with a sort of foremanship over his fellow criminals; in consideration of which it is stipulated on the part of Nicholas that he do work at the more desirable profession of stucco-making, together with the execution of orders for sculpture, the proceeds of which were to be considered the property of Fladge, he allowing the generous stipend of one shilling a week to the artist. Here, then, Mr. Fladge becomes sensible of the fact that some good always came of great evils, for indeed his criminal was so far proving a mine of wealth that he only hoped it might be his fortune to receive many more such enemies of the state: he cared not whether they came from Fetter or Fuddle's court. With sense enough to keep his heart-burnings well stored away in his own bosom, Nicholas soon became a sort of privileged character. But if he said little, he felt much; nor did he fail to occupy every leisure moment in inciting his brother bondmen to a love of freedom. So far had he gained complete control over their feelings, that scarce two months of his sentence had expired ere they would have followed his lead to death or freedom.

Among those human souls stored for sale was one Sal Stiles, an olive wench of great beauty, and daughter of one of the very first families. This Sal Stiles, who was indeed one of the most charming creatures to look upon, had cousins whom the little world of Charleston viewed as great *belles*; but these said belles were never known to

ring out a word in favour of poor Sal, who was, forsooth, only what (in our vulgar parlance) is called a well-conditioned and very marketable woman. Considering, then, that Nicholas had by Grabguy been separated from his wife and children, the indulgent reader, we feel assured, will excuse our hero for falling passionately in love with this woman. That it was stipulated in the convention between himself and Fladge, he should take her unto himself, we are not justified in asserting; nevertheless, that that functionary encouraged the passion rather than prevented their meetings is a fact our little world will not pretend to deny.

CHAPTER L.

A CONTINUATION OF THE LAST CHAPTER.

A YEAR and two months have rolled by, since Nicholas, a convict, took up his abode within the frowning walls of a prison: thus much of Fuddle's merciful sentence has he served out. In the dreary hours of night, fast secured in his granite cell, has he cherished, and even in his dreams contemplated, the means of escaping into that freedom for which his soul yearns. But, dearly does he love Sal Stiles, to whose keeping he confides the secret of his ambition; several times might he, having secured the confidence of Fladge, have effected his own escape; but the admonitions of a faithful heart bid him not leave her behind in slavery. To that admonition of his bosom did he yield, and resolve never to leave her until he secured her freedom. A few days after he had disclosed to her his resolution, the tall figure of Guy Grantham, a broker of slaves by profession, appeared in the prison yard, for the purpose of carrying away the woman, whom he had sold for the Washington market, where her charms would indeed be of much value during the session, when congress-men most do riot. Already were the inseparable chains about her hands, and the miserable woman, about to be led away, bathed in grief. Nicholas, in his studies, had just finished a piece of scroll-work for Mrs. Fladge, as a companion approached him in great haste, and whispered the word of trouble ('they're taking her

away") in his ear. Quick as lightning did the anger of his very soul break forth like a tempest: he rushed from his place of labour, vaulted as it were to the guard gate, seized the woman as she stepped on the threshold in her exit, drew her back with great force, and in a defiant attitude, drawing a long stiletto from his belt, placed himself between her and her destroyer. "Foes of the innocent, your chains were not made for this woman; never shall you bear her from this; not, at least, while I have arm to defend her, and a soul that cares not for your vengeance!" spake he, with curling contempt on his lip, as his adversaries stood aghast with fear and trembling. "Nay!—do not advance one step, or by the God of justice I make ye feel the length of this steel!" he continued, as Grantham nervously motioned an attempt to advance. Holding the woman with his left hand pressed backward, he brandished his stiletto in the faces of his opponents with his right. This was rebellion in its most legal acceptation, and would have justified the summary process Grantham was about adopting for the disposal of the instigator, at whose head he levelled his revolver, and, without effect, snapped two caps, as Nicholas bared his bosom with the taunt—"Coward, shoot!" Mr. Fladge, who was now made sensible of the error his indulgence had committed, could not permit Grantham the happy display of his bravery; no, he has called to his aid some ten subguardsmen, and addressing the resolute Grantham, bids him lay aside his weapon. Albeit he confesses his surprise at such strange insolence and interference; but, being responsible for the life, thinks it well to hold a parley before taking it. Forsooth his words fall useless on the ears of Nicholas, as defiantly he encircles the woman's wais' with his left

arm, bears her away to the block, dashes the chains from her hands, and, spurning the honied words of Fladge, hurls them in the air, crying: "You have murdered the flesh;—would you chain the soul?" As he spoke, the guard, having ascended the watch tower, rings out the first alarm peal. "Dogs of savage might! ring your alarms; I care not," he continued, casting a sardonic glance at the tower as the sound died away on his ear. His pursuers now made a rush upon him, but ere they had secured him he seized a heavy bludgeon, and repelling their attack, found some hundred of his companions, armed with stone hammers, rallying in his defence. Seeing this formidable force thus suddenly come to his rescue, Mr. Fladge and his force were compelled to fall back before the advance. Gallantly did Nicholas lead on his sable band, as the woman sought refuge in one of the cells, Mr. Fladge and his possee retreating into the guard-house. Nicholas, now in full possession of the citadel, and with consternation and confusion triumphant within the walls, found it somewhat difficult to restrain his forces from taking possession of the guard-house, and putting to death those who had sought shelter therein. Calmly but firmly did he appeal to them, and beseech them not to commit an outrage against life. As he had placed himself between the woman and her pursuers, so did he place himself before a file of his sable companions, who, with battle hammers extended, rushed for the great gates, as the second alarm rung out its solemn peal. Counselling his compatriots to stand firm, he gathered them together in the centre of the square, and addressed them in a fervent tone, the purport of which was, that having thus suddenly and unexpectedly become plunged into what would

be viewed by the laws of the land as insurrection, they must stand on the defensive, and remember it were better to die in defence of right than live under the ignorance and sorrow of slavery.

While our hero (whose singular exploit we have divested of that dramatic effect presented in the original) addressed his forlorn band in the area of the prison, strange indeed was the scene of confusion presenting along the streets of the city. The alarm peals had not died ineffectual on the air, for as a messenger was despatched to warn the civil authorities of the sad dilemma at the prison, the great bell of St. Michael's church answered the warning peal with two loud rings; and simultaneously the city re-echoed the report of a bloody insurrection. On the long line of wharfs half circling the city, stood men aghast with fright; to the west all was quiet about the battery; to the south, the long rampart of dark moving pines that bordered on that side the calm surface of a harbour of unsurpassed beauty, seemed sleeping in its wonted peacefulness; to the east, as if rising from the sea to mar the beauty of the scene, stood fort Sumpter's sombre bastions, still and quiet like a monster reposing; while retracing along the north side of the harbour, no sign of trouble flutters from Fort Moultrie or Castle Pinkney—no, their savage embrasures are closed, and peace hangs in mists over their dark walls. The feud is in the city of democrats, wherein there are few who know not the nature of the warning peal; nor, indeed, act on such occasions like a world in fear, waiting but the tap of the watchman's baton ere it rushes to bloodshed.

In the busy portion of the city have men gathered at the corners of the street to hold confused controversy; with

anxious countenances and earnest gesticulations do they discuss the most certain means of safety. Ladies, in fright, speedily seek their homes, now asking questions of a passer-by, whose intense excitement has carried off his power of speech, then shunning every luckless negro who chances in their way. The rumour of an insurrection, however falsely founded, turns every negro (of skin there is no distinction) into an enemy; whilst the second sound of the alarm peal makes him a bloody votary, who it needs but the booming of the cannon ere he be put to the sword. Guardsmen, with side-arms and cross-belts, are eager and confused, moving to and fro with heavy tread; merchants and men of more easy professions hasten from their labours, seek their homes, prepare weapons for the conflict, and endeavour to soothe the fears of their excited families, beseeching protection. That a deadly struggle is near at hand no one doubts, for men have gathered on the house-tops to watch the moving mass, bearing on its face the unmistakeable evidence of fear and anxiety, as it sweeps along the streets. Now the grotesque group is bespotted with forms half dressed in military garb; then a dark platoon of savage faces and ragged figures brings up the rear; and quickly catching the sound "To the Workhouse!" onward it presses to the scene of tumult. Firemen in curious habiliment, and half-accoutred artillerymen, at the alarm peal's call are rallying to their stations, as if some devouring element, about to break over the city, demanded their strongest arm; while eager and confused heads, protruded from green, masking shutters, and in terror, would know whither lies the scene of the outbreak. Alarm has beset the little world, which now moves a medley of fear and trembling.

The clock in St. Michael's tall spire has just struck two, as, in the arena of the prison, Nicholas is seen, halted in front of his little band, calmly awaiting the advance of his adversaries, who, fearing to open the great gates, have scaled the long line of wall on the north side. Suddenly the sound of an imploring voice breaks upon his ear, and his left hand is firmly grasped, as starting with surprise he turns and beholds the slave woman, her hair hanging loosely over shoulders, and her face bathed in tears. With simple but earnest words does she admonish him against his fatal resolution. Fast, and in the bitter anguish of her soul, fall her implorings; she would have him yield and save his life, that she may love him still. Her words would melt his resolution, had he not taken the rash step. "In my soul do I love thee, woman!" he says, raising her gently to her feet, and imprinting a kiss upon her olive brow; "but rather would I die a hero than live a crawling slave: nay, I will love thee in heaven!" The woman has drawn his attention from his adversaries, when, in that which seems a propitious moment, they rush down from the walls, and ere a cry from his band warn him of the danger, have well nigh surprised and secured him. With two shots of a revolver pierced through the fleshy part of his left arm, does he bound from the grasp of his pursuers, rally his men, and charge upon the miscreants with undaunted courage. Short but deadly is the struggle that here ensues; far, indeed, shrieks and horrid groans rend the very air; but the miscreants are driven back to from whence they came, leaving on the ground five dead bodies to atone for treble the number dead of our hero's band. In the savage conflict did the woman receive a fatal bullet, and now lies

writhing in the agonies of death (a victim of oppression in a land of liberty) at our hero's feet. Not a moment is there to spare, that he may soothe her dying agonies, for a thundering at the great gates is heard, the bristling of fire-arms lists upon his ear, and the drums of the military without beat to the charge. Simultaneously the great gates swing back, a solid body of citizen soldiery, ready to rush in, is disclosed, and our hero, as if by instinct moved to rashness, cries aloud to his forces, who, following his lead, dash recklessly into the soldiery, scatter it in amazement, and sweep triumphantly into the street. The first line of soldiery did not yield to the impetuous charge without effect, for seven dead bodies, strewn between the portals of the gate, account for the sharp report of their rifles. Wild with rage, and not knowing whither to go, or for what object they have rushed from the bounds of their prison house, our forlorn band, still flourishing their battle hammers, have scarcely reached the second line of military, stationed, in war order, a few squares from the prison, when our hero and nine of his forlorn band fall pierced through the hearts with rifle bullets. Our Nicholas has a sudden end; he dies, muttering, "My cause was only justice!" as twenty democratic bayonets cut into shreds his quivering body. Oh, Grabguy! thou wilt one day be made to atone for this thy guilt. Justice to thy slave had saved the city its foreboding of horror, and us the recital of a bloody tragedy we would spare the feelings of our readers by ending here.

Having informed the reader that Ellen Juvarne was mother of Nicholas, whom she bore unto Marston, we will now, draw aside the veil, that he may know her real origin,

and be the better prepared to appreciate the fate of her child. This name, then, was a fictitious one, which she had been compelled to take by Romescos, who stole her from her father, Neamathla, a Creek Indian. In 1820, this brave warrior ruled chief of the Mickasookes, a tribe of brave Indians settled on the borders of the lake of that name, in Florida. Old in deeds of valour, Neamathla sank into the grave in the happy belief that his daughter, the long-lost Nasarge, had been carried into captivity by chiefs of a hostile tribe, in whose chivalrous spirit she would find protection, and religious respect for her caste. Could that proud spirit have condescended to suppose her languishing in the hands of mercenary slave-dealers, his tomahawk had been first dipped in the blood of the miscreant, to avenge the foul deed. From Romescos, Nasarge, who had scarce seen her twelve summers, passed into the hands of one Silenus, who sold her to Marston, for that purpose a fair slave seems born to in our democratic world.

And now again must we beg the reader's indulgence while we turn to the counter-scene of this chapter. The influence of that consternation which had besieged the city was not long in finding its way to the citadel, a massive fort commanding the city from the east. On the plat in front are three brass field-pieces a few artillerymen have wheeled out, loaded, and made ready to belch forth that awful signal, the initiated translate thus:—"Proceed to the massacre! Dip deep your knives in the heart of *every* negro!"* At the alarm-bell's first tap were the guns made

* Certain alarm-bells are rung in case of an insurrection of the negroes, which, if accompanied by the firing of three cannon at the

ready—at the second peal were matchlocks lighted—and nervous men waited in breathless suspense the third and last signal peal from the Guard Tower. But, in a moment that had nearly proved fatal to thousands, and as the crash of musketry echoed in the air, a confused gunner applied the match: two vivid flashes issued from the cannon, their peals booming successively over the city. It was at that moment, citizens who had sought in their domiciles the better protection of their families might be seen in the tragic attitude of holding savage pistols and glistening daggers at the breasts of their terrified but faithful servants,—those, perhaps, whose only crime was sincerity, and an earnest attachment to master's interests. The booming of a third cannon, and they had fallen, victims of fear, at the feet of their deluded victors. Happily, an act of heroism (which we would record to the fame of the hero) saved the city that bloody climax we sicken while contemplating. Ere the third gun belched its order of death, a mounted officer, sensible of the result that gun would produce, dashed before its angry mouth, and at the top of his voice cried out—"In Heaven's name, lay your matchlock down: save the city!" Then galloping to the trail, the gunner standing motionless at the intrepid sight, he snatched the

citadel, is the signal for an onslaught of the whites. The author, on asking a gentleman why he exhibited so much fear, or why he deemed it necessary to put to the sword his faithful servants, answered—"Slaves, no matter of what colour, sympathise with each other in their general condition of slavery. I could not, then, leave my family to the caprice of their feelings while I sought the scene of action to aid in suppressing the outbreak.

fiery torch from his hand, and dismounting, quenched it on the ground. Thus did he save the city that awful massacre the misdirected laws of a democratic state would have been accountable for to civilisation and the world.

CHAPTER LI.

IN WHICH ARE PLEASURES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS.

IN a former chapter of this narrative have we described our fair fugitive, Annette, as possessing charms of no ordinary kind; indeed, she was fair and beautiful, and even in the slave world was by many called the lovely blonde. In a word, to have been deeply enamoured of her would have reflected the highest credit on the taste and sentiment of any gallant gentleman. Seeming strange would it be, then, if the stranger to whose care we confided her (and hereafter to be called Montague, that being his christian name) should render himself liable to the charge of stupidity did these attractions not make a deep impression on his heart. And here we would not have the reader lay so grave a charge at his door; for, be it known, ye who are not insensible to love's electric force, that scarce had they reached New York, ere Montague began to look upon Annette with that species of compassion which so often, in the workings of nature's mystery, turns the sympathies of the heart into purest love. The misery or happiness of this poor girl he viewed as dependent on himself: this, forsooth, was strengthened by the sad recital of her struggles, which caused his sympathies to flow in mutual fellowship with her sorrows. As he esteemed her gentleness, so was he enamoured of her charms; but her sorrows carried the captive arrow into his bosom, where she fastened it with holding

forth that wrist broken in defence of her virtue : nay, more, he could not refrain a caress, as in the simplicity of her heart she looked in his face smilingly, and said she would he were the father of her future in this life. But, when did not slavery interpose its democratic obstacles ?—when did it not claim for itself the interests of federal power, and the nation's indulgence ?—when did it not regard with coldest indifference the good or ill of all beyond its own limits ? The slave world loves itself ; but, though self-love may now and then give out a degree of virtue, slavery has none to lend those beyond its own atmosphere. To avoid, then, the terrors to which, even on the free soil of the north, a fugitive slave is constantly liable, as also that serpent-like prejudice (for into the puritanic regions of New England, forsooth, does slavery spread its more refined objections to colour) which makes the manners of one class cold and icy, while acting like a dagger in the hearts of the other, was it necessary to change her name. How many of my fair readers, then, will recur to and recognise in the lovely Sylvia De Lacy,—whose vivacity made them joyous in their school days, and whose charms all envied,—the person of Annette Mazatlin. Nothing could be more true than that the pretty blonde, Sylvia De Lacy, who passed at school as the daughter of a rich Bahamian, was but the humble slave of our worthy wag, Pringle Blowers. But we beg the reader to remember that, as Sylvia De Lacy, with her many gallant admirers, she is a far different person to Annette the slave.

Clotilda is made acquainted with the steps Montague has taken in behalf of his charge, as also of a further intention he will carry out at the expiration of two years ; which said

intention is neither more nor less than the making Sylvia De Lacy his bride ere her school days have ended. ' In the earnestness of a heart teeming of joy, does Clotilda respond to the disclosures she is pleased to term glad tidings. ' Oft and fervently has she invoked the All-protecting hand to save her child from the licentious snares of slavery ; and now that she is rescued, her soul can rest satisfied. How her heart rejoices to learn that her slave child will hereafter be happy in this life ! ever will she pray that peace and prosperity reward their virtues. Her own prospects brighten with the thought that she may, ere long, see them under her own comfortable roof, and bestow a mother's love on the head of her long-lost child.

And now my reader will please to suppose these two years of school-days passed—that nuptial ceremony in which so many mingled their congratulations, and showered blandest smiles upon the fair bride, celebrated in a princely mansion not far from the aristocratic Union Square of New York—and our happy couple launched upon that path of matrimony some facetious old gentlemen have been pleased to describe as so crooked that others, fear to journey upon it. They were indeed a happy couple, with each future prospect golden or fortune's sunshine. Did we describe in detail the reign of happiness portended on the bright day of that nuptial ceremony, how many would recognise the gay figures of those who enlivened the scene—how deceptive would seem the fair face of events—how obscured would be presented the life of a slave in this our world of freedom—how false that democracy so boastful of its even-handed rule !

Two years have rolled into the past, since Montague led

the fair Sylvia to the altar. Pringle Blowers has pocketed the loss of his beauty, the happy couple have lost all thought of slavery, and a little responsibility coming in due time adds to make their happiness complete. Now the house to which Montague was connected in New York had an agent in New Orleans; which agent was his brother. In the course of time, then, and as the avenues of business expanded, was it deemed necessary to establish a branch house at Memphis, the affairs of which it was agreed should be conducted by Montague. To this new scene of life my reader will please suppose our happy couple, having journeyed overland from Cincinnati, and with hearts gladdened of hope for the future, now gliding down that river of gorgeous banks, on board the good steamer bearing its name. As our young mother again enters the atmosphere of slavery, misgivings force themselves irresistibly upon her feelings. The very face of nature wears a sluggish air; the fresh, bright offspring of northern energy, so forcibly illustrated in the many cheerful looking villages here and there dotting its



free soil, is nowhere to be seen,—society again puts forth its blighting distinctions: there is the man-owner's iron deportment contrasting with the abjectness of his slave: forcibly does the change recall scenes of the past. But, with the certain satisfaction that no one will recognise the slave in her, do those misgivings give way to the happier contemplation of her new home affording the means of extending a succouring hand to some poor mortal, suffering in that condition of life through which she herself has passed.

After a pleasant passage, then, do we find them comfortably settled in Memphis, that city of notorious character, where the venerable Lynch presides judge over all state cases, and administers summary justice according to the most independent of bar rules. Montague pursues the ordinary routine of a flourishing business, and moves among the very best society of the little fashionable world; with which his Sylvia, being the fair *belle* of the place, is not only a great favourite, but much sought after and caressed. Gentle as a slave, so was she an affectionate mother and dutiful wife. Some twelve months passed pleasantly at their new home, when there came to the city a Jew of the name of Salamons Finch. This Finch, who was "runner" to a commercial firm in the city of Charleston (he was lank of person, with sallow, craven features), knew Annette when but a child. Indeed, he was a clerk of Graspum when that gentleman sold the fair slave to Gurdoin Choicewest; in addition to which he had apartments at Lady Tuttlewell's most fashionable house, where the little doll-like thing used to be so sprightly in waiting at table. The quick eye of this harpy, as may readily be supposed,

was not long in detecting the person of Annette the slave in our fair mother; which grand discovery he as soon communicated to Montague, pluming himself a generous fellow for being first to disclose what he supposed a valuable secret. Indeed, such was the force of association on this fellow, that he could not bring his mind to believe such a match possible, unless the fair fugitive (of whose escape he was well posted) had, by the exercise of strategy, imposed herself on the gentleman. The reader may easily picture to himself the contempt in which Montague held the fellow's generous exposé; but he as readily became sensible of the nature of the recognition, and of its placing him in a dangerous position. At first he thought of sending his wife and child immediately to her mother, in Nassau; but having intimations from the fellow that the matter might be reconciled with golden eagles, he chose rather to adopt that plan of procuring peace and quietness. With a goodly number of these gold eagles, then, did he from time to time purchase the knave's secrecy; but, with that singular propensity so characteristic of the race, was he soon found making improper advances to the wife of the man whose money he received for keeping secret her early history. This so exasperated Montague, that in addition to sealing the fellow's lips with the gold coin, he threatened his back with stripes of the raw hide, in payment of his insolence. Albeit, nothing but the fear of exposure, the consequences of which must prove fatal, caused him to bear with pain the insult while withholding payment of this well-merited debt. With keen instincts, and a somewhat cultivated taste for the beautiful, Finch might with becoming modesty have pleaded them in extenuation of his conduct; but the

truth was, he almost unconsciously found himself deeply enamoured of the fair woman, without being able to look upon her as a being elevated above that menial sphere his vulgar mind conditioned for her when in slavery. Here, then, the reader will more readily conceive than we can describe the grievous annoyances our otherwise happy couple were subjected to; nor, if a freeman's blood course in his veins, can he fail to picture the punishment it so dearly merited. However, it came to pass that in the course of a few months this fellow disappeared suddenly, and nearly at the same time was Montague summoned to New Orleans to direct some complicated affairs of his brother, who lay a victim to that fearful scourge which so often devastates that city of balmy breezes. After due preparations for an absence of some two months, Montague set out on his journey; but had not been forty-eight hours gone, when Finch again made his appearance, and taking advantage of a husband's absence, pressed his advances with grossest insult, threatening at the same time to convey information of the discovery to Pringle Blowers. Successively did these importunities fail to effect Mr. Finch's purpose; but he was of an indomitable temper, and had strong faith in that maxim of his race, which may be transcribed thus:—"If one effort fail you, try another." To carry out this principle, then, did Finch draw from the cunning inventive of his brain a plan which he could not doubt for a moment would be successful. The reader may blush while we record the fact, of Finch, deeming a partner necessary to the gaining his purpose, finding a willing accomplice in one of Montague's clerks, to whom he disclosed the secret of the fair woman being nothing more than a fugitive slave, whose

shame they would share if the plan proved successful. This ingenious plan, so old that none but a fellow of this stamp would have adopted it, was nothing more than the intercepting by the aid of the clerk all Montague's letters to his wife. By this they came in possession of the nature of his family affairs; and after permitting the receipt of two letters by Sylvia, possessed themselves of her answers that they might be the better able to carry out the evil of their scheme. After sufficient time had passed, did Sylvia receive a letter, duly posted at New Orleans, purporting to have been written by a clerk in the employ of the firm, and informing her, having acknowledged becomingly the receipt of her letter, that Montague had been seized with the epidemic, and now lay in a precarious state. Much concerned was she at the painful intelligence; but she almost, as soon found consolation in the assurances of the clerk who brought her the letter, and, to strengthen his own cause, told her he had seen a captain just arrived up, who had met her husband a day after the date of the letter, quite well. Indeed, this was necessary to that functionary's next move, for he was the conspirator of Finch, and the author of the letter which had caused so much sadness to the woman who now sought his advice. In suspense did the anxious woman wait the coming tidings of her affectionate husband: alas! in a few days was the sad news of his death by the fatal scourge brought to her in an envelope with broad black border and appropriate seal. Overwhelmed with grief, the good woman read the letter, describing her Montague to have died happy, as the conspirator looked on with masterly indifference. The confidential clerk of

the firm had again performed a painful and unexpected duty. The good man died, said he, invoking a blessing on the head of his child, and asking heaven to protect his wife; to which he would add, that the affairs of the house were in the worst possible condition, there not being assets to pay a fraction of the debts. And here we would beg the reader to use his imagination, and save us the description of much that followed. Not all their threats nor persuasions, however, could induce her to yield to their designs; defiantly did she repulse the advances of the crawling Finch; nobly did she spurn his persuasions; firmly did she, heedless of his threat to acquaint Pringle Blowers of her whereabouts, bid him begone from her door. The fellow did go, grievously disappointed; and, whether from malice or mercenary motives we will not charge, sought and obtained from Pringle Blowers, in exchange for his valuable discovery, a promise of the original reward. Shudder not, reader, while we tell it! It was not many days ere the notorious Blowers set out for Memphis, recovered his lost property, and, like a lamb panting in the grasp of a pursuing wolf, was, with her young child, dragged back, a wretch, into the melancholy waste of slavery. Long and loudly was the grand discovery resounded through the little world of Memphis; not in sympathy for the slave, for many hearts were made glad with joy over what the fashionable were pleased to term a fortunate disclosure and a happy removal. Many very grave gentlemen said the miscreant who dared impose a slave on society well merited punishment at the hands of the venerable Lynch,—a judge of that city whose celebrity is almost world wide.

CHAPTER LII.

A FAMILIAR SCENE, IN WHICH PRINGLE BLOWERS HAS
BUSINESS.

OF a bright morning, not many days after Pringle Blowers returned with his fair slave to Charleston (which said slave he would not sell for gold), there sat on a little bench at the entrance gate of the "upper workhouse," the brusque figure of a man, whose coarse and firmly knit frame, to which were added hard and weather-stained features, indicated his having seen some fifty summers. But, if he was brusque of figure and coarse of deportment, he had a good soft heart in the right place; nor did he fail to exercise its virtues while pursuing the duties of a repulsive profession; albeit, he was keeper of the establishment, and superintended all punishments. Leisuredly he smoked of a black pipe; and with shirt sleeves rolled up, a grey felt hat almost covering his dark, flashing eyes, and his arms easily folded, did he seem contemplating the calm loveliness of morning. Now he exhaled the curling fume, then scanned away over the bright landscape to the east, and again cast curious glances up and down the broad road stretching in front of his prison to the north and south. It was not long before a carriage and pair appeared on the hill to the south, advancing at a slow pace towards the city. The keeper's keen eye rested upon it intently, as it neared, bearing in a back-seat what seemed to be a lady fine of

figure and deportment ; while on the front drove a figure of great rotundity, the broad, full face shining out like a ripe pumpkin in a sun shower. "It's Pringle Blowers, I do believe in my soul ! but it's seeming strange how he's got a lady to ride with him," mused the man, who, still watching the approach, had quite forgotten the escape of the fair slave. The man was not mistaken, for as he touched his hat, on the carriage arriving opposite the gate, it halted, and there, sure enough, was our valiant democrat, who, placing his whip in the socket, crooked his finger and beckoned the keeper. "Broadman !" said he, (for that was the man's name) I've a bit of something in your way of business this morning." The honest functionary, with seeming surprise, again touching his hat as he approached the vehicle, replied : "Your servant, sir !" Blowers motioned his hand to the woman, whose tears were now, to Broadman's surprise, seen coursing down her pale cheeks. To use a vulgar phrase, Broadman was entirely "taken aback" by the singularity of Blowers' manner ; for the woman, whose dress and deportment the honest man conceived to be nothing less than that of a lady of one of the "first families," obeying the motion, began to descend from the carriage. "Now, Broadman," continued Blowers, arranging his reins, and with clumsy air making his descent over the fore wheels, take that 'ar wench a' mine, and, by the State's custom, give her the extent of the law, well laid on."* The man hesitated, as if doubting his senses ; rather would he have been courteous to what he still viewed as a lady, than extend his rude hand to lead her away.

* The author here writes the incident as given by the prison-keeper.

"Pardon me, Sir! but you cannot mean what you say," nervously spoke the man, as in doubt he exchanged glances first with the fair woman and then with Blowers. "I means just what I says," returned that gentleman, peremptorily; "you'ze hearn a' that 'un afore. She's a nigger a' mine, what runned away more nor six years ago; come, do the job for her, and no fussing over't." "Nigger!" interrupted the man, in surprise. "Yes!" rejoined Blowers, emphasising his assurance with oaths, of which he had a never-failing supply, "that's the cussed white nigger what's gin me all the bother. The whiter niggers is, the more devil's in em; and that ar' one's got devil enough for a whole plantation; 't isn't the licks I cares about, but it's the humblin' on her feelings by being punished in the workhouse!" The man of duty was now brought to his senses, when, seeing Blowers was inclined to relieve his anger on what he was pleased to consider the stupidity of a keeper, he took the weeping but resolute woman by the arm, and called a negro attendant, into whose charge he handed her, with an order to "put her in the slings." Soon she disappeared within the gate, following the mulatto man. And here we will again spare the reader's feelings, by omitting much that followed. Blowers and Broadman follow the hapless woman, as she proceeds through a narrow passage leading to the punishment room, and when about half way to that place of torture, a small, square door opens on the right, into a dingy office, the keeper says is where he keeps his accounts with the State, which derives a large revenue from the punishments. Into this does the worthy man invite his patron, whom he would have be seated while the criminal is got "all right" in the slings. Fain would Blowers go and attend the business himself; but Broadman

saying "that cannot be," he draws from his pocket a small flask, and, seemingly contented, invites him to join in "somethin'" he says is the very choicest. Broadman has no objection to encouraging this evidence of good feeling, which he will take advantage of to introduce the dialogue that follows. "Good sir," says he, "you will pardon what I am about to say, for indeed I feel the weakness of my position when addressing you, fortune having made a wide distinction between us; but judge me not because I am coarse of flesh, nor have polished manners, for I have a heart that feels for the unfortunate." Here Blowers interrupted the keeper by saying he would hear no chicken-hearted interpositions. "Remember, keeper," he added, "you must not presume on the small familiarity I have condescended to admit in drinking with you. I hold no controversies with prison-keepers (again he gulps his brandy) or their subs; being a servant of the state, I order you to give that wench the extent of the law. She shall disclose the secret of her escape, or I'll have her life; I'm a man what won't stand no nonsense, I am!" The keeper, rejoining, hopes he will pardon the seeming presumption; but, forsooth, notwithstanding necessity has driven him to seek a livelihood in his repulsive occupation, there is a duty of the heart he cannot betray, though the bread of his maintenance be taken from him. Blowers again assumes his dignity, rises from his seat, scowls significantly at the keeper, and says he will go put through the business with his own hands. "Good friend," says Broadman, arresting Blowers' progress, by the state's ruling you are my patron; nevertheless, within these walls I am master, and whatever you may bring here for punishment shall have the benefit of my discretion. I loathe

the law that forces me to, in such cases, overrule the admonitions of my heart. I, sir, am low of this world,—good! but, in regret do I say it, I have by a slave mother two fair daughters, who in the very core of my heart I love; nor would I, imitating the baser examples of our aristocracy, sell them hapless outcasts for life.” Here Blowers again interrupted by allowing his passion to manifest itself in a few very fashionable oaths; to which he added, that he (pacing the room several times) would no longer give ear to such nonsense from a man of Broadman’s position,—which was neither socially nor politically grand. “No doubt, good sir, my humble and somewhat repulsive calling does not meet your distinguished consideration; but I am, nevertheless, a man. And what I was about to say—I hope you will grant me a hearing—was, that having these two daughters (poverty only prevents my purchasing them) has made me sensible of these slaves having delicate textures. The unhappy possession of these daughters has caused me to reflect—to study constitutions, and their capacity to endure punishments. The woman it has pleased you to bring here for chastisement, I take it, is not coarse of flesh; but is one of those unfortunates whom kindness might reform, while the lash never fails to destroy. Why, then, not consider her in the light of a friendless wretch, whom it were better to save, than sink in shame? One word more and I am done (Blowers was about to cut short the conversation); the extent of the law being nothing less than twenty blows of the paddle, is most severe punishment for a woman of fine flesh to withstand on her naked loins. Nor, let me say—and here I speak from twelve years’ experience—can the lady—I beg pardon, the slave you bring me!—bear these blows: no, my

lips never spoke truer when I say she'll quiver and sink in spasms ere the second blow is laid on." Here—some twenty minutes having passed since the fair slave was led into the punishment room—Blowers cut short the conversation which had failed to thaw his resolution, by saying Broadman had bored his ears in spinning out his long song, and if he were unwilling to fulfil the duties of his office, such should be reported to the authorities, who would not permit workhouse-keepers so to modify their ordinances that black and white niggers have different punishments. "Nay, sir!" says the honest man, with an air of earnestness, as he rises from his seat; "follow me, and with the reality will I prove the truth of my words." Here he proceeds to that place of torments, the punishment-room, followed by Blowers; who says, with singular indifference—"Can do the job in five minutes; then I'll leave her with you for two, three, or four days or so. Then if she's civilly humbled down, I'll send my nigger fellow, Joe, with an order for her. Joe'll be the fellow's name; now, mind that: but you know my Joe, I reckon?" The keeper led the way, but made no reply; for indeed he knew nothing of his Joe, there being innumerable niggers of that name. As the men left the little office, and were sauntering up the passage, our worthy friend Rosebrook might be seen entering in search of Broadman; when, discovering Blowers in his company, and hearing the significant words, he shot into a niche, unobserved by them, and calling a negro attendant, learned the nature of his visit. And here it becomes necessary that we discover to the reader the fact of Rosebrook having been apprised of the forlorn woman's return, and her perilous position in the hands of Pringle Blowers; and, further, that the communi-

cation was effected by the negro man Pompe, who we have before described in connection with Montague at the time of his landing from the witch-like schooner. This Pompe was sold to Blowers but a few months before Annette's recovery, and acting upon the force of that sympathy which exists among fellow slaves of a plantation, soon renewed old acquaintance, gained her confidence, and, cunningly eluding the owner's watchfulness, conveyed for her a letter to the Rosebrooks. In truth, Pompe had an inveterate hatred of Blowers, and under the incitement would not have hesitated to stake his life in defence of the fair woman. Now, the exacting reader may question Rosebrook's intrepidity in not proceeding at once to the rescue of the victim; but when we say that he was ignorant of the positive order given the keeper, and only caught distinctly the words—"I'll send my nigger fellow, Joe, with an order for her!" they may discover an excuse for his hastily withdrawing from the establishment. Indeed, that my reader may withhold his censure, it may be well to add that he did this in order to devise more strategical means of effecting her escape.

And now, ye who have nerves—let them not be shaken; let not your emotions rise, ye who have souls, and love the blessings of liberty; let not mothers nor fathers weep over democracy's wrongs; nor let man charge us with picturing the horrors of a black romance when we introduce the spectacle in the room of punishments: such, be it known, is not our business, nor would we trifle unjustly with the errors of society; but, if chivalry have blushes, we do not object to their being used here. The keeper, followed by Blowers, enters a small room at the further end of the passage. It is some sixteen feet long by twelve wide, and proportionately

high of ceiling. The pale light of a tallow candle, suspended from the ceiling by a wire, and from which large flakes of the melted grease lay cone-like on the pine floor, discloses the gloom, and discovers hanging from the walls, grim with smoke, sundry curious caps, cords, leathern cats, and the more improved paddles of wood, with flat blades. The very gloom of the place might excite the timid; but the reflection of how many tortures it has been the scene, and the mysterious stillness pervading its singularly decorated walls, add still more to increase apprehension. A plank, some two feet wide, and raised a few inches, stretches across the floor, and is secured at each end with cleets. About midway of this are ropes securing the victim's feet; and through the dim light is disclosed the half nude body of our fair girl, suspended by the wrists, which are clasped in bands of cord, that, being further secured to a pulley block, is hauled taut by a tackle. Suddenly the wretched woman gives vent to her feelings, and in paroxysms of grief sways her poor body to and fro, imploring mercy! "Nay, master! think that I am a woman—that I have a heart to feel and bleed; that I am a mother and a wife, though a slave. Let your deeds be done quickly, or end me and save me this shame!" she supplicates, as the bitter, burning anguish of her goaded soul gives out its flood of sorrow. Chivalry, forsooth, lies cold and unmoved—Blowers has no relish for such inconsistency;—such whinings, he says, will not serve southern principles. The mulatto attendant has secured the fall, and stands a few feet behind Blowers and the keeper, as that functionary says, laying his coarse hands on the woman's loins, "How silky!" The mulatto man shakes his head, revengefully, making a grimace, as Broadman, having

selected the smallest paddle (reminding us of the curious sympathy now budding between the autocratic knout and democratic lash) again addresses Blowers. "I doubt, sir," he says, "if the woman stand a blow. Necessity's a hard master, sir; and in this very act is the test more trying than I have ever known it. I dissemble myself when I see a wretch of fine flesh—a woman with tender senses, in distress, and I am made the instrument of adding to her suffering. Indeed, sir, when I contemplate the cause of their wretchedness, and the poverty forcing me to remain in this situation, no imagination can represent the horror of my feelings."

"We have no demand on your feelings, my man! we want your duty—what the state put you here to perform," interrupted Blowers, placing his thumbs in his vest, and making a step backward. Another second, and the attendant lighted a hand-lamp,—a sharp, slapping blow was heard, a death-like shriek followed; the flesh quivered and contracted into a discoloured and inflamed pustule; the body writhed a few seconds in convulsive spasms; a low moaning followed, and that fair form hung swooning in the slings, as the keeper, in fright, cried out, at the top of his voice, to the attendant—"Lower away the fall!" As if the fiend had not yet gratified his passion, no sooner was the seemingly lifeless body lowered clumsily to the floor, than he grasped the weapon from Broadman's hand, and like a tiger seeking its banquet of flesh, was about to administer a second blow. But Broadman had a good heart, the admonitions of which soared high above the state's mandate: seizing Blowers in his arms, he ejected him from the door, ran back to the prostrate woman, released her bruised limbs from the

fastenings, gathered her to his arms ; and with nervous hands and anxious face did he draw from his pocket the well-timed hartshorn, by the application of which he sought to restore her, as the mulatto man stood by, bathing her temples with cold water. " Ah ! shame on the thing called a man who could abuse a sweet creature of fine flesh, like thee ! it's not many has such a pretty sweet face," says Broadman, with an air of compassion, resting her shoulder against his bended knee as he encircles it with his left arm, and looks upon the pale features, tears glistening in his honest eyes. We might say with Broadman—" It's not the finest, nor the polished of flesh, that hath the softest hearts." But, reader, having performed our duty, let us drop the curtain over this sad but true scene ; and when you have conjectured the third and fourth acts of the drama, join with us in hoping the chivalry, of our State may yet awake to a sense of its position, that, when we again raise it, a pleasanter prospect may be presented.

CHAPTER LIIL.

IN WHICH ARE DISCOVERIES AND PLEASANT SCENES.

ST. PATRICK'S night closed the day on which the scenes of the foregoing chapter were enacted; and that patron saint being of aristocratic descent, which caused him to be held in high esteem by our "very first families," than among whom better admirers could nowhere be found, his anniversary was sure to be celebrated with much feasting and drinking. But while this homage to the good saint made glad the hearts of thousands—while the city seemed radiant of joy, and reeling men from Hibernia's gorgeous hall found in him an excuse for their revelries—there sat in the box of a *café*, situated on the west side of Meeting Street, two men who seemed to have a deeper interest at heart than that of the Saint's joy on his road to paradise. The one was a shortish man, coarse of figure, and whose browned features and figured hands bespoke him a sailor; the other was delicate of figure, with pale, careworn countenance and nervous demeanour. Upon the marble slab, on which they rested their elbows, sat a bottle of old Madeira, from which they sipped leisurely, now and then modulating their conversation into whispers. Then the man of brown features spoke out more at ease, as if they had concluded the preliminaries of some important business.

"Well, well,—now isn't that strange?" said he, sighing

as he spread his brawny hands upon the white marble. "Natur's a curious mystery, though (he looked intently at the other): why, more nor twenty years have rolled over since I did that bit of a good turn, and here I is the very same old Jack Hardweather, skipper of the Maggy Bell. But for all that—and I'd have folks know it!—the Maggy's as trim a little craft as ever lay to on a sou'-easter; and she can show as clean a pair of heels as any other—barring her old top timbers complain now and then—to the best cutter as ever shook Uncle Sam's rags." His hard features softened, as in the earnest of his heart he spoke. He extended his hand across the table, grasping firmly that of his nervous friend, and continued—"And it was no other witch than the taunt Maggy Bell that landed that good woman safe on the free sands of old Bahama." The Maggy, he tells the other, is now at the wharf, where the good wife, Molly Hardweather, keeps ship while the boys take a turn ashore.

"There's always a wise provision to relieve one's feelings when sorrow comes unexpectedly," returns the nervous man, his hand trembling as he draws forth the money to pay the waiter who answered his call.

"Yes!" quickly rejoined the other, "but keep up a good heart, like a sailor hard upon a lee shore, and all 'll be bright and sunny in a day or two. And now we'll just make a tack down the bay (street) and sight the Maggy. There's a small drop of somethin' in the locker, that'll help to keep up yer spirits, I reckon—a body's spirits has to be tautened now and then, as ye do a bobstay,—and the wife (she's a good sort of a body, though I say it) will do the best she can in her hard way to make ye less troubled at

heart. Molly Hardweather has had some hard ups and downs in life, knows well the cares of a mother, and has had twins twice; yes (adds the hardy seafarer), we arn't polished folks, nor high of blood, but we've got hearts, and as every true heart hates slavery, so do we, though we are forced to dissemble our real feelings for the sake of peace in the trade." Here the delicate man took the sailor's arm, and sallied out to seek the little Maggy Bell, the former saying the meeting was as strange as grateful to his very soul. Down Market Street, shaded in darkness, they wended their way, and after reaching the wharf, passed along between long lines of cotton bales, piled eight and ten feet high, to the end, where lay motionless the pretty Maggy Bell, as clipper-like a craft as ever spread canvas. The light from the cabin shed its faint gleams over the quarter-deck, as Hardweather halted on the capsill, and with a sailor's pride run his quick black eye along her pirate-like hull, then aloft along the rigging. Exultingly, he says, "She is the sauciest witch that ever faced sea or showed a clean pair of heels. The Maggy Bell! (he pats his friend on the shoulder) why, sir, she has—just between ourselves now—slided many a poor slave off into freedom; but folks here don't think it of me. Now, if I reckon right (he bites his tobacco, and extends it to the stranger), and I believe I do, it's twenty years since the Maggy, of one dark night, skinned it by that point, with Fort Pinkney on it, yonder, that good creature on board." He points to the murky mass, scarce visible in the distance, to the east. "And now she's one of the noblest women that ever broke bread to the poor; and she's right comfortable off, now,—alwa's has a smile, and a kind word, and some-

thing good for old Jack Hardweather whenever she sees him. Lord bless yer soul! (here he shakes his head earnestly, and says he never was a lubber), Jack Hardweather didn't care about the soft shot for his locker; it was my heart that felt the kindness. Indeed, it always jumps and jerks like a bobstay in a head sea, when I meets her. And then, when I thinks how 'twas me done the good turn, and no thanks to nobody! You hearn of me 'afore, eh (he turns to his companion, who measuredly answers in the affirmative). Well, then, my name's Skipper Jack Hardweather, known all along the coast; but, seeing how the world and navigation's got shortened down, they call me old Jack Splitwater. I s'ppose it's by the way of convenience, and so neither wife nor me have a bit of objection." Here the conversation was interrupted by the good wife's round, cheery face shooting suddenly from out the companion-way, and enjoining our friend Jack to come away aboard, her high peaked cap shining like snow on a dark surface. The truth was, that Splitwater, as he was styled, had become so much absorbed of excitement as to forget the length of his yarn. "Come away, now!" says the good wife, "everybody's left the Maggy to-night; and ther's na knowin' what 'd a' become 'un her if a'h hadn't looked right sharp, for ther' wer' a muckle ship a'mast run her dune; an' if she just had, the Maggy wad na mar bene seen!" The good wife shakes her head; her rich Scotch tongue sounding on the still air, as with apprehension her chubby face shines in the light of the candle she holds before it with her right hand. Skipper Splitwater will see his friend on board, he says, as they follow her down the companion-ladder. "Wife thinks as much of the Maggy—and would, I believe

in my soul, cry her life out if anything happened till her : wife's a good body aboard a ship, and can take a trick at the wheel just as well as Harry Span the mate. Skipper Splitwater leads the way into a little dingy cabin, a partition running athwart ships dividing it into two apartments ; the former being where Skipper Hardweather "sleeps his crew" and cooks his mess, the sternmost where he receives his friends. This latter, into which he conducts the nervous man, is lumbered with boxes, chests, charts, camp-seats, log-lines, and rusty quadrants, and sundry marine relics which only the inveterate coaster could conceive a use for. But the good wife Molly, whose canny face bears the timely wrinkles of some forty summers, and whose round, short figure is so simply set off with bright plaid frock and apron of gingham check, in taste well adapted to her humble position, is as clean and tidy as ever was picture of mine Vrow Vardenstien. Nevertheless, (we know the reader will join us in the sentiment) that which gave the air of domestic happiness a completeness hitherto unnoticed, was a wee responsibility, as seen sprawling and kicking goodnaturedly on the white pillow of the starboard berth, where its two peering eyes shone forth as bright as new-polished pearls. The little darling is just a year old, Dame Hardweather tells us ; it is a twin,—the other died, and, she knows full well, has gone to heaven. Here she takes the little cherub in her lap, and having made her best curtsy as Hardweather introduces her to his nervous friend, seats herself on the locker, and commences suckling it, while he points to the very place on the larboard side where Clotilda ("Ah ! I just caught the name," he says,) used to sit and sorrow so for her child.

“And then,” he continues, “On the quarter-deck she’d go and give such longing looks back, like as if she wanted to see it; and when she couldn’t she’d turn away and sigh so. And this, Molly,” he continues, “is the self-same child my friend here, who I am as happy to meet as a body can be, wants me to carry off from these wolves of slavery; and if I don’t, then my name’s not Jack Splitwater!” So saying, he bustles about, tells the nervous man he must excuse the want of finery, that he has been a hard coaster for God knows how many years, and the little place is all he can afford; for indeed he is poor, but expects a better place one of these days. Then he draws forth from a little nook in the stern locker a bottle, which he says contains pure stuff, and of which he invites his visitor to partake, that he may keep up a good heart, still hoping for the best. The nervous man declines his kind invitation,—he has too much at heart, and the sight of the child so reminds him of his own now blighted in slavery. The good woman now becoming deeply concerned, Hardweather must needs recount the story, and explain the strange man’s troubles, which he does in simple language; but, as the yarn is somewhat long, the reader must excuse our not transcribing it here. With anxious face and listening ears did the woman absorb every word; and when the earnest skipper concluded with grasping firmly the man’s hand, and saying—“Just you scheme the strategy, and if I don’t carry it out my name aint Jack Hardweather!” would she fain have had him go on. “Lack a day, good man!” she rejoined, fondling closer to her bosom the little suckling; “get ye the wee bairn and bring it hither, and I’ll mak it t’uther twin—na body’ll kno’t! and da ye ken hoo ye may mak the bonny

wife sik a body that nane but foxes wad ken her? Just mak her a brae young sailor, and the Maggy Bell 'll da the rest on't." Hardweather here interrupted Molly's suggestion, which was, indeed, most fortunate, and albeit supplied the initiative to the strategy afterwards adopted, (for slavery opens wide the field of strategy), by reminding the stranger that she had a long Scotch head. The night had now well advanced; the stranger shook the woman's hand firmly, and bid her good night, as a tear gushed into his eyes. The scene was indeed simple, but touching. The hardy mariner will accompany his friend to the wharf; and as he again turns on the capsill, cannot bid him good night without adding a few words more in praise of the little Maggy Bell, which is inscribed in gilt letters on the flash-board of her stern. Holding his hand, he says: "Now, keep the heart up right! and in a day or two we'll have all aboard, and be in the stream waiting a fair breeze—then the Maggy 'll play her part. Bless yer soul! the little craft and me's coasted down the coast nobody knows how many years; and she knows every nook, creek, reef, and point, just as as well as I does. Just give her a double-reefed mainsail, and the lug of a standing jib, and in my soul I believe she'd make the passage without compass, chart, or a hand aboard. By the word of an old sailor, such a craft is the Maggy Bell. And when the Spanish and English and French all get mixed up about who owned Florida, the Maggy and me's coasted along them keys when, blowing a screecher, them Ingins' balls flew so, a body had to hold the hair on his head; but never a bit did the Maggy mind it." The stranger's heart was too full of cares to respond to the generous man's simplicity; shaking his hand

fervently, he hid him good night, and disappeared up the wharf.

We apprehend little difficulty to the reader in discovering the person of Montague in our nervous man, who, in the absence of intelligence from his wife, was led to suspect some foul play. Nor were his suspicions unfounded ; for, on returning to Memphis, which he did in great haste, he found his home desolate, his wife and child borne back into slavery, and himself threatened with Lynch law. The grief which threatened to overwhelm him at finding those he so dearly loved hurled back into bondage, was not enough to appease a community tenacious of its colour. No! he must leave his business, until the arrival of some one from New York, to the clerk who so perfidiously betrayed him. With sickened heart, then, does he—only too glad to escape the fury of an unreasoning mob—seek that place of bondage into which the captives have been carried ; nay, more, he left the excited little world (reporting his destination to be New York) fully resolved to rescue them at the hazard of his life, and for ever leave the country. Scarce necessary, then, will it be for us to inform the reader, that, having sought out the Rosebrooks, he has counselled their advice, and joined them in devising means of relief. Blowers had declared, on his sacred honour, he would not sell the captives for their weight in gold.

Rosebrook had no sooner received Annette's letter from the hand of Pompe than he repaired to Blowers' plantation—as well to sound that gentleman's disposition to sell his captives, as a necessary precaution against the dangers he had incurred through his participation in the fair girl's escape; for albeit the disclosure might be extorted from

her by cruelty. But Blowers was too much of a gentleman to condescend to sell his captive; nor would he listen to arguments in her behalf. Nevertheless, we will not under-rate Blowers' character, that the reader may suppose him devoid of compassion; for (be it recorded to his fame) he did, on the morning following that on which the punishment we have described in the foregoing chapter took place, send the child, whose long and piercing cries he could no longer endure, to the arms of its poor disconsolate mother, whom he hoped would take good care of it.

Now, let not the reader restrain his fancy, but imagine, if he can, Pringle Blowers' disappointment and state of perturbation, when, three days after the punishment, he presented himself at Broadman's establishment, and was informed by that functionary that the fair mother was *non est*. With honest face did Broadman assert his ignorance of wrong. That he had not betrayed his duty he would satisfy the enraged man, by producing the very order on which he delivered them to Joe! "Yes, Joe was his name!" continues the honest man; "and he asserted his ownership, and told a straight story, and didn't look roughish." He passes the order to Blowers, who, having examined it very cautiously, says: "Forgery, forgery!—'tis, by the Eternal!" Turning his fat sides, he approaches the window, and by the light reads each successive word. It is written in a scrawl precisely like his; but, forsooth, it cannot be his. However, deeming it little becoming a man of his standing to parley with Broadman, he quickly makes his exit, and, like a locomotive at half speed, exhausting his perturbation the while, does he seek his way into the city where he discovers his loss to the police. We have in

another part of our history described Blowers as something of a wag ; indeed, waggery was not the least trait in his curious character, nor was he at all cautious in the exercise of it ; and, upon the principle that those who give must take, did he render himself a fit object for those who indulge in that sort of pastime to level their wit upon. On this occasion, Blowers had not spent many hours in the city ere he had all its convenient corners very fantastically decorated with large blue placards, whereon was inscribed the loss of his valuable woman, and the offer of the increased sum of four hundred dollars for her apprehension. The placards were wonderful curiosities, and very characteristic of Blowers, who in this instance excited no small amount of merriment among the city wags, each of whom cracked a joke at his expense. Now it was not that those waggish spirits said of his placard things exceedingly annoying to his sensitive feelings, but that every prig made him the butt of his borrowed wit. One quizzed him with want of gallantry,—another told him what the ladies said of his loss,—a third pitied him, but hoped he might get back his property ; and then, Tom Span, the dandy lawyer, laconically told him that to love a fair slave was a business he must learn over again ; and Sprout, the cotton-broker, said there was a law against ornamenting the city with blue placards and type of such uncommon size. In this interminable perplexity, and to avoid the last-named difficulty, did he invoke the genius of the “bill-sticker,” who obliterated the blue placards by covering them over with brown ones, the performance of which, Blowers himself superintended. This made the matter still worse, for with jocose smile did every wag say he had hung the city in

mourning for his loss; which singular proceeding the ladies had one and all solemnly protested against. Now, Blowers' regard for the ladies was proverbial; nor will it disparage his character to say that no one was more sensitive of their opinions concerning himself. In this unhappy position, then, which he might have avoided had he exercised more calmly his philosophy, did his perturbation get the better of him;—an object of ridicule for every wag, and in ill-favour with the very first ladies, never was perplexed man's temper so near the exploding point of high pressure. And here, forsooth, disgusted with the whole city, nor at all pleased with the result of his inventive genius, he sought relief in strong drinks and a week of dissipation; in which sad condition we must leave him to the reader's sympathy.

As some of our fair readers may be a little prudish, or exacting of character, and as we are peculiarly sensitive of the reputation some of the characters embodied in this history should bear to the very end, we deem it prudent here not to disclose the nature of the little forgery perpetrated at Blowers' expense, nor the means by which it was so cleverly carried out, to the release of the fair captives, who must now be got out of the city. Should we, in the performance of this very desirable duty, fail to please the reader's taste for hair-breadth escapes, unnatural heroism, and sublime disinterestedness, an excuse may be found in our lack of soul to appreciate those virtues of romance. We have no taste for breathless suspenses, no love of terror: we deal not in tragedy, nor traffic on dramatic effects. But as the simplest strategy is often the most successful of results, so did it prove in this particular case; for, be it known, that on the morning of the twenty-fourth of

March, —, was Molly Hardweather's suggestion adopted and effectually carried out, to the gratification of sundry interested persons. Calm and bright was that morning; Charleston harbour and its pretty banks seemed radiant of loveliness; the phantom-like Maggy Bell, with mainsail and jib spread motionless in the air, swung gently at anchor midway the stream; and Dame Hardweather sat in the dingy cabin, her little chubby face beaming contentment as she nursed the "t'other twin." The brusque figure of old Jack, immersed in watchfulness, paced to and fro the Maggy's deck; and in the city as trim a young sailor as ever served signal halliards on board man-o'-war, might be seen, his canvas bag slung over his shoulder, carelessly plodding along through the busy street, for the landing at the market slip. Soon the Maggy's flying jib was run up, then the fore-sail followed and hung loose by the throat. Near the wheel, as if in contemplation, sat Montague, while Hardweather continued his pacing, now glancing aloft, then to seaward, as if invoking Boreas' all-welcome aid, and again watching intently in the direction of the slip. A few minutes more and a boat glided from the wharf, and rowed away for the little craft, which it soon reached, and on board of which the young sailor flung his bag, clambered over the rail, and seemed happy, as old Jack put out his brawny hand, saying: "Come youngster, bear a hand now, and set about brightening up the coppers!" We need not here discover the hearts that leaped with joy just then; we need not describe the anxiety that found relief when the young sailor set foot on the Maggy's deck; nor need we describe those eyes on shore that in tears watched the slender form as it disappeared from sight. Just then a breeze wafted from the north, the anchor was

hove up, the sails trimmed home, and slowly seaward moved the little bark. As she drifted rather than sailed past Fort Pinkney, two burly officials, as is the custom, boarded to search for hapless fugitives ; but, having great confidence in the honesty of Skipper Splitwater, who never failed to give them of his best cheer, they drank a pleasant passage to him, made a cursory search, a note of the names of all on board (Jack saying Tom Bolt was the young sailor's), and left quite satisfied. Indeed, there was nothing to excite their suspicions, for the good dame sat nursing the "twa twins," nor left aught to discover the discrepancy between their ages, if we except a pair of little red feet that dangled out from beneath the fringe of a plaid shawl. And the young sailor, who it is hardly necessary to inform the reader is Annette, was busy with his cooking. And now the little craft, free upon the wave, increased her speed as her topsails spread out, and glided swiftly seaward, heaven tempering the winds to her well-worn sails. God speed the Maggy Bell as she vaults over the sea ; and may she never want water under keel, slaves to carry into freedom, or a good Dame Hardweather to make cheerful the little *cabin* ! say we.

And now, reader, join us in taking a fond farewell of the Rosebrocks, who have so nobly played their part, to the shame of those who stubbornly refuse to profit by their example. They played no inactive part in the final escape ; but discretion forbids our disclosing its minutiae. They sought to give unto others that liquid of life to which they owed their own prosperity and happiness ; nor did selfish motive incite them to action. No ; they sought peace and prosperity for the state : they would bind in lasting fellow-

ship that union so mighty of states, which the world with mingled admiration and distrust watches ; which in-kindred compact must be mightier, which divided must fall ! And while taking leave of them, hoping their future may be brightened with joys—and, too (though it may not comport with the interests of our southern friends) that their inventive genius may never want objects upon which to illustrate itself so happily—let us not forget to shake old Jack Hardweather warmly by the hand, invoking for him many fair winds and profitable voyages. A big heart enamelled of “coarse flesh” is his ; but with its warm functions has he done much good ; may he be rich of heaven’s rewards, for he is poor of earth’s !

CHAPTER LIV.

IN WHICH IS A HAPPY MEETING, SOME CURIOUS FACTS
DEVELOPED, AND CLOTILDA'S HISTORY DISCLOSED

It was seven days after the sailing of the *Maggy Bell*, as described in the foregoing chapter, that Montague was seen sitting in the comfortably furnished parlour of a neat cottage in the suburbs of Nassau. The coal fire burned brightly in a polished grate; the carpets and rugs, and loiling mats, breathed of care and comfort; the tabbled furniture and chastely worked ottomans, and sofas, and chairs, and inlaid workstands, seem, bright of regularity and taste; and the window curtains of lace and damask, and the scroll cornices from which they flowingly hung, and the little landscape paintings that hung upon the satin-papered walls, and the soft light that issued from two girandoles on the mantel-piece of figured marble, all lent their cheering aid to make complete the radiant picture of a happy home. But Montague sat nervous of anxiety. "Mother won't be a minute!" said a pert little fellow of some seven summers, who played with his hands as he sat on the sofa, and asked questions his emotions forbid answering. On an ottoman near the cheerful fire, sat, with happy faces, the prettily dressed figures of a boy and girl, older of age than the first; while by the side of Montague sat Maxwell, whose manly countenance we transcribed in the early part of our narrative, and to whom Montague had in part related the sad

events of the four months past, as he heaved a sigh, saying, "How happy must he die who careth for the slave!" Ere the words had escaped his lips, the door opened, and the graceful form of a beautiful woman entered, her finely oval but pensive face made more expressive by the olive that shaded it, and those deep soul-like eyes that now sparkled of gentleness, and again flashed with apprehension. Nervously she paused and set her eyes with intense stare on Montague; then vaulted into his arms and embraced him, crying, "Is not my Annette here?" as a tear stole down her cheeks. Her quick eye detected trouble in his deportment; she grasped his left hand firmly in her right, and with quivering frame besought him to keep her no longer in the agony of suspense. "Why thus suddenly have you come? ah!—you disclose a deep-rooted trouble in not forewarning me! tell me all and relieve my feelings!" she ejaculated, in broken accents. "I was driven from that country because I loved nature and obeyed its laws. My very soul loved its greatness, and would have done battle for its glories—yea, I loved it for the many blessings it hath for the favoured; but one dark stain on its bright escutcheon so betrayed justice, that no home was there for me—none for the wife I had married in lawful wedlock." Here the woman, in agonising throbs, interrupted him by enquiring why he said there was no home for the wife he had married in lawful wedlock—was not the land of the puritans free?" "Nay!" he answered, in a measured tone, shaking his head, "it is bestained not with their crimes—for dearly do they love justice and regard the rights of man—but with the dark deeds of the man-seller, who, heedless of their feelings, and despising their moral fectitude, would make solitary those happy

homes that brighten in greatness over its soil." Again, frantic of anxiety, did the woman interrupt him: "Heavens!—she is not dragged back into slavery?" she enquired, her emotions rising beyond her power of restraint, as she drew bitter pangs from sweetest truths. With countenance bathed in trouble did Montague return her solicitous glance, and speak. "Into slavery (he muttered, in half-choked accents) was she hurled back." He had not finished the sentence ere anxiety burst its bounds, and the anxious woman shrieked, and fell swooning in his arms. Even yet her olive face seemed pale of beauty. The cheerful parlour now rung with confusion, servants bustled about in fright, the youthful family shrieked in fear, the father sought to restore the fond mother, as Montague chafed her right hand in his. Let us leave to the reader's conjecture a scene his fancy may depict better than we can describe, and pass to one more pleasant of results. Some half an hour had transpired, when, as if in strange bewilderment, Clotilda opened her eyes and seemed conscious of her position. A deep crimson shaded her olive cheeks, as in ravishing ease she lay upon the couch, her flushed face and her thick wavy hair, so prettily parted over her classic brow, curiously contrasting with the snow-white pillow on which it rested. A pale and emaciated girl sat beside her, smoothing her brow with her left hand, laying the right gently on the almost motionless bosom, kissing the crimsoning cheek, and lisping rather than speaking, "Mother, mother, oh mother!"—it's only me." And then the wet courses on her cheeks told how the fountain of her soul had overflowed. Calmly and vacantly the woman gazed on the fair girl, with whom she had been left alone. Then she raised her left hand to her brow, sighed,

and seemed sinking into a tranquil sleep. "Mother! mother! I am once more with my mother!" again ejaculates the fair girl, sobbing audibly; "do you not know me, mother?" Clotilda started as if suddenly surprised. "Do I dream?" she muttered, raising herself on her elbow, as her great soft eyes wandered about the room. She would know who called her mother. "'Tis me," said the fair girl, returning her glances, "do you not know your Annette—your slave child?" Indeed the fair girl was not of that bright countenance she had anticipated meeting, for though the punishment had little soiled her flesh the dagger of disgrace had cut deep into her heart, and spread its poison over her soul. "This my Annette?" exclaimed Clotilda, throwing her arms about the fair girl's neck, drawing her frantically to her bosom, and bathing her cheeks with her tears of joy. "Yes, yes, 'tis my long-lost child; 'tis she for whom my soul has longed—God has been merciful, rescued her from the yawning death of slavery, and given her back to her mother! Oh, no, I do not dream—it is my child,—my Annette!" she continued. Long and affectionately did they mingle their tears and kisses. And now a fond mother's joy seemed complete, a child's sorrow ended, and a happy family were made happier. Again the family gathered into the room, where, as of one accord, they poured out their affectionate congratulations. One after another were the children enjoined to greet Annette, kiss her, and call her sister. To them the meeting was as strange as to the parents it was radiant of joy. "Mother!" said the little boy, as he took Annette by the hand and called her sister, and kissed her as she kissed him, "was you married before you was married to father?" The affectionate

mother had no answer to make; she might have found one in the ignominy of the slave world. And now, when the measure of joy seemed full—when the bitterness of the past dwindled away like a dream, and when the future like a beacon hung out its light of promise.—Clotilda drew from a small workstand a discoloured paper written over in Greek characters, scarce intelligible. “Annette!” said she, “my mother gave me this when last I saw her. The chains were then about her hands, and she was about to be led away to the far south slave market: by it did I discover my history.” Here she unfolded its defaced pages, lifted her eyes upwards invokingly, and continued—“To speak the crimes of great men is to hazard an oblivion for yourself, to bring upon you the indifference of the multitude; but great men are often greatest of crime—for so it proved with those who completed my mother’s destruction. Give ear, then, ye grave senators, and if ye have hearts of fathers, lend them! listen, ye queen mothers of my country, whose sons and daughters are yet travelling the world’s uncertainties! listen, ye fathers, who have souls above Mammon’s golden grasp, and sons in whom ye put your trust! listen, ye brothers, whose pride brightens in a sister’s virtue! listen, ye sisters, who enjoy paternal affections, and feel that one day you may grace a country’s social life! listen, ye philanthropists, ye men of the world, who love your country, and whose hearts yearn for its liberties—ye men sensitive of our great Republic’s honour, nor seek to traffic in the small gains of power when larger ones await you; and, above all, lend your hearts, ye brothers of the clergy in the slave church, and give ear while I tell who I am, and pray ye, as ye love the soul of woman, to seek out those who, like unto

what I was, now wither in slavery. My grandfather's name was Iznard Maldonard, a Minorcan, who in the year 1767 (some four years after Florida was by the king of Spain ceded to Great Britain) emigrated with one Dr. Turnbull—whose name has since shone on the pages of history—to that land of sunshine and promise; for, indeed, Florida, is the Italy of America. In that year did numerous of the English aristocracy conceive plans as various as inconsistent for the population and improvement of the colony. With a worthy motive did Lord Rolle draw from the purlieus of London* three hundred wretched females, whose condition he would better by reforming and making aid in founding settlements. This his lordship found no easy task; but the climate relieved him of the perplexity he had brought upon himself, for to it did they all fall victims in a very short time. But Turnbull, with motive less commendable, obtained a grant of his government, and, for the sum of four hundred pounds, (being then in the Peleponnesus) was the governor of Modon bribed into a permission to convey sundry Greek families to Florida, for colonization. Returning from Modon with a number of families, he touched at the islands of Corsica and Minorca, added another vessel to his fleet, and increased the number of his settlers to fifteen hundred. With exciting promises did he decoy them to his land of Egypt, which proved a bondage to his shame. He would give them lands, free passages, good provisions and clothing; but none of these promises did he keep. A long passage of four months found many victims to its hardships, and those who arrived safe were emaciated

* See Williams' History of Florida, page 188. State Papers.

of sickness. Into the interior were these taken ; and there they founded a settlement called New Smyrna, the land for which (some sixty thousand acres) was granted by the governor of Florida. Faithfully and earnestly did they labour for the promised reward, and in less than five years had more than three thousand acres of land in the highest state of cultivation ; but, as Turnbull's prosperity increased, so did the demon avarice ; and men, women, and children, were reduced to the most abject slavery. Tasks greater than they could perform were assigned them, and a few Italians and negroes made overseers and drivers. For food the labourers were allotted seven quarts of corn per week. Many who had lived in affluence in their own country were compelled to wear osnaburgs, and go bare-foot through the year. More than nine years were those valuable settlers kept in this state of slavery, the cruelties inflicted upon them surpassing in enormity those which so stigmatised the savage Spaniards of St. Domingo. Drivers were compelled to beat and lacerate those who had not performed their tasks ; many were left naked, tied all night to trees, that mosquitoes might suck their blood, and the suffering wretch become swollen of torture. Some, to end their troubles, wandered off, and died of starvation in the forest, and, including the natural increase, less than six hundred souls were left at the end of nine years. But, be it known to those whose hearts and ears I have before invoked, that many children of these unfortunate parents were fair and beautiful, which valuable charms singularly excited the cupidity of the tyrant, who betook himself to selling them for purposes most infamous. A child overhearing the conversation of three English gentlemen who made an excursion to the settlement, and being

quick of ear, conveyed the purport of it to his mother, who, in the night, summoned a council of her confidants to concoct the means of gaining more intelligence. The boy heard the visitors, who stood in the great mansion, which was of stone, say, "Did the wretches know their rights they had not suffered such enormities of slavery." It was resolved that three ask for long tasks, under the pretext of gaining time to catch turtle on the coast; but having gained the desired time, they set off for St. Augustine, which they reached, after swimming rivers and delving almost impenetrable morasses. They sought the attorney-general of the province, Mr. Younge, (I speak his name with reverence), and with an earnest zeal did he espouse the cause of this betrayed people. At that time, Governor Grant—since strongly suspected of being concerned with Turnbull in the slavery of the Greeks and Minoreans—had just been superseded by Tonyn, who now had it in his power to rebuke a tyrant, and render justice to a long-injured people. Again, on the return of the envoys, who bore good tidings, did they meet in secret, and choose one Pallicier, a Greek, their leader. This man had been master mechanic of the mansion. With wooden spears were the men armed and formed into two lines, the women, children, and old men in the centre; and thus did they set off from the place of bondage to seek freedom. In vain did the tyrant (whose name democracy has enshrined with its glories) pursue them, and exhaust persuasion to procure their return. For three days did they wander the woods, delve morasses, and swim rivers, ere they reached the haven of St. Augustine, where, being provided with provisions, their case was tried, and, albeit, though Turnbull interposed

all the perfidy wealth could purchase, their freedom established. But alas! not so well was it with those fair daughters whom the tyrant sold slaves to a life of infamy, and for whose offspring, now in the bitterness of bondage, do we plead. Scores of these female children were sold by the tyrant; but either the people were drunk of joy over their own liberty, and forgot to demand the return of their children, or the good Younge felt forcibly his weakness to bring to justice the rich and great (for the law is weak where slavery makes men great), so as to make him disgorge the ill-gotten treasure he might have concealed, but the proof of which nothing was easier than to obliterate.

“Maldonard, then, was my grandfather; and, with my grandmother and three children, was of those who suffered the cruelties I have detailed. Two of his children were girls, fair and beautiful, whom the tyrant, under the pretext of bettering their condition in another colony, sold away into slavery. One was my dear mother.” (Here tears coursed down the woman’s cheeks.) “And she, though I blush to tell it, was sold to Rovero, who was indeed *my* father as well as Franconia’s. But I was years older than Franconia (I visit her grave by day, and dream of her by night); nor was it strange that she should trace the cause of similarity in our features. Forsooth, it was that singular discovery (of which I was long ignorant), coupled with the virtues of a great soul, that incited her to effect my escape. Rovero, ere he married Franconia’s mother, sold Sylvia Maldonard, who was my mother; and may angels bring glad tidings of her spirit! Yes, gentle reader, my poor mother was sold to one Silenus, of whom Marston bought my body while heaven guarded the soul: but here

would I drop the curtain over the scene, for Maldonard is dead ; and in the grave of his Italian wife, ere he gained his freedom, was he buried." Here again the fond mother, as she concluded, lifted her eyes invokingly, fondled her long-lost child to her bosom,—smiled upon her, kissed her, and was happy.

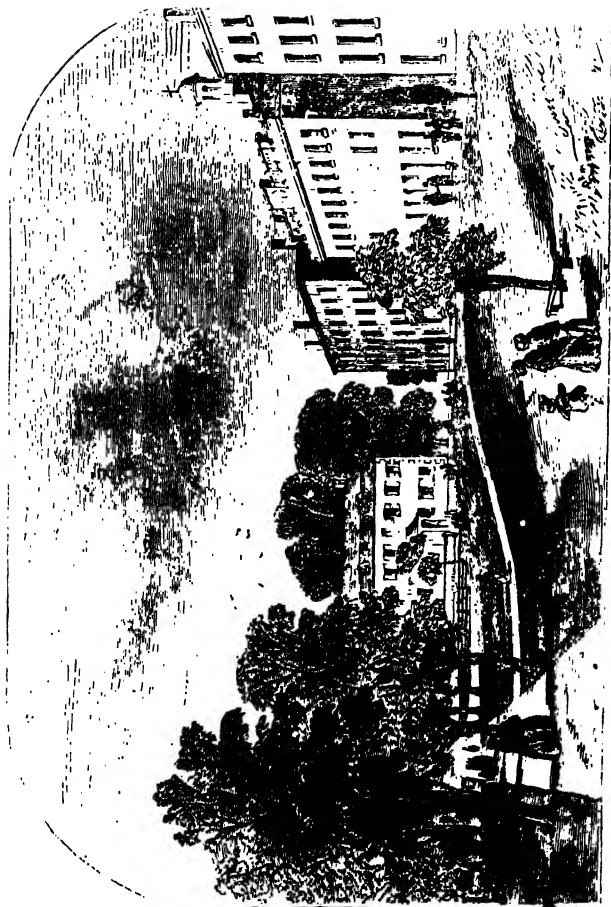
CHAPTER LV.

IN WHICH A PLOT IS DISCLOSED, AND THE MAN-SELLER
MADE PAY THE PENALTY OF HIS CRIMES.

WHILE the scenes we have detailed in the foregoing chapter were being enacted at Nassau, there stood in the portico of a massive dwelling, fronting what in Charleston is called the "Battery Promenade," the tall and stately figure of a man, wrapped in a costly black cloak, the folds of which lay carelessly about his neck and shoulders. For some minutes did he stand, hesitating, and watching up and down the broad walk in front. The gas-light overhead shed its glare upon the freestone walls (for the night was dark), and, as he turned, discovered the fine features of a frank and open countenance, to which the flashing of two great intelligent eyes, a long silvery beard, and a flowing moustache, all shaded by the broad brim of a black felt hat, lent their aid to make impressive. Closer he muffled his face in the folds of his cloak, and spoke. "Time!" said he, in a voice musical and clear, "bath worn little on his great mansion; like his heart, it is of good stone." The mansion, indeed, was of princely front, with chiselled façade and great doric windows of deep fluted mouldings, grand in outline. Now a small hand stole from beneath his cloak, rapped gently upon the carved door of black walnut, and rang the bell. Soon the door swung open, and a negro in a black coat, white vest, and handkerchief of great

stiffness, and nether garments of flashy stripes, politely bowed him into a hall of great splendour. Rows of statuary stood in alcoves along its sides; the walls dazzled with bright coloured paintings in massive gilt frames; highly coloured and badly blended mythological designs spread along the ceiling: the figure of a female, with pearly tears gushing from her eyes, as on bended knee she besought mercy of the winged angel perched above her, stood beside the broad stairway at the further end of the hall—(strangely emblematical of the many thousand souls the man-seller had made weep in the bitterness of slavery); the softest rugs and costly Turkey carpets with which its floor was spread yielded lightly to the footfall, as the jetting lights of a great handelier shed refulgence over the whole: indeed, what there lacked of taste was made up with air of opulence. The negro exhibited some surprise at the stranger's dress and manner, for he affected ease and indifference. "Your master at leisure?" spake he. "Business, or a friend?" returned the negro, making one of his best bows, and drawing back his left foot. "Both," was the quick reply. "I, boy, am a gentleman!"—"I sees dat, mas'r," rejoined the boy, accompanying his answer with another bow, and requesting the stranger's name, as he motioned him into a spacious drawing-room on the right, still more gorgeously furnished. "My name is Major Blank: your master knows my name: I would see him quickly!" again spoke the stranger, as the boy quickly disappeared to make the announcement. The heavy satin-damask curtains, of finest texture, that adorned the windows: the fresco-paintings of the walls; the elaborate gilding that here and there in bad taste relieved the cornices; the massive pictures that hung in gauze

PLATE IX.



covered frames upon the walls; the chastely designed carpets, and lolls, and rugs, with which the floor gave out its brilliancy; the costly tapestry of the curiously carved furniture that stood here and there about the room; and the soft light of a curiously constructed chandelier, suspended from the left hand of an angel in bronze, the said angel having its wings pinioned to the ceiling, its body in the attitude of descending, and its right hand gracefully raised above the globe, spreading its prismatic glows over the whole, did indeed make the scene resplendent of luxury. The man carelessly seated himself at a table that stood in the centre of the room, threw the hat he had declined yielding to the negro on the floor beside him, rested the elbow of his left arm on the table, and his head in his hand, as with the fingers of his right hand did he fret the long silvery beard that bedecked his chin, and contemplate with eager gaze the scene around him. "Yea, the man-seller hath, with his spoils of greed, gotten him a gorgeous mansion; even he liveth like a prince, his head resteth more in peace, and because he hath great wealth of crime men seek to honour him. The rich criminal hath few to fear; but hard is the fate of him who hath not the wherewith to be aught but a poor one!" he muttered to himself, as the door opened, and the well-rounded figure of Graspum whisked into the room. The negro bowed politely, and closed the door after him, as the stranger's eye flashed upon his old acquaintance, who, bedecked somewhat extravagantly, and with a forced smile on his subtle countenance, advanced rubbing his hands one over the other, making several methodical bows, to which the stranger rose, as he said, "Most happy am I to see you, Major! Major

Blake, I believe, I have the pleasure of receiving?" Here the stranger interpolated by saying his name was not Blake, but Blank: the other apologised, said he was just entertaining a small but very select circle of friends; nevertheless, always chose to follow the maxim of "business before pleasure." Again he bustled about, worked his fingers with a mechanical air, frisked them through his hair, with which he covered the bald surface of his head, kept his little keen eyes leering apprehensively on what he deemed a ripe customer, whom he bid keep his seat. To an invitation to lay off his cloak the stranger replied that it was of no consequence. "A planter just locating, if I may be permitted to suggest?" enquired Graspum, taking his seat on the opposite side of the table. "No!" returned the other, emphatically; "but I have some special business in your line." The man of business, his face reddening of anxiety, rose quickly from his seat, advanced to what seemed a rose-wood cabinet elaborately carved, but which was in reality an iron safe encased with ornamental wood, and from it drew forth a tin case, saying, as he returned and set it upon the table, "Lots from one to five were sold yesterday at almost fabulous prices—never was the demand for prime people better; but we have Lots (here he began to disgorge invoices) six, seven, eight, and nine left; all containing the primest of people! Yes, sir, let me assure you, the very choicest of the market." He would have the customer examine the invoices himself, and in the morning the live stock may be seen at his yard. "You cherish no evil in your breast, in opposition to the command of Him who reproved the wrong of malice; but you still cling to the sale of men, which you conceive no harm, eh, Graspum?"

returned the stranger, knitting his brows, as a curl of fierce hatred set upon his lip. With an air of surprise did Graspum hesitate for a moment, and then, with a measured smile, said, "Why, Lord bless you! it would be a dishonour for a man of my celebrity in business to let a day escape without a sale; within the last ten days I have sold a thousand people, or more,—provided you throw in the old ones!" Here he again frisked his fingers, and leaned back in his chair, as his face resumed an air of satisfaction. The stranger interrupted as the man-seller was about to enquire the number and texture of the people he desired. "Graspum," said he, with significant firmness, setting his eyes upon him with intense stare,—“I want neither your men, nor your women, nor your little children; but, have you a record of souls you have sunk in the bitterness of slavery in that box, (here the stranger paused, and pointed at the box on the table), keep it until you knock for admittance at the gates of eternity.” It was not until this moment that he could bring his mind, which had been absorbed in the mysteries of man-selling, to regard the stranger in any other light than that of a customer. "Pardon me, sir!" said he, somewhat nervously, "but you speak with great familiarity." The stranger would not be considered intrusive. "Then you have forgotten me, Graspum?" exclaimed the man, with an ominous laugh. As if deeply offended at such familiarity, the man-seller shook his head rebukingly, and replied by saying he had an advantage of him not comprehensible. "Then have you sent my dearest relatives to an untimely grave, driven me from the home of my childhood, and made a hundred wretches swim a sea of sorrow; and yet you do not know

me?" Indeed, the charges here recounted would have least served to aid the recognition, for they belonged only to one case among many scores that might have been enumerated. He shook his head in reply. For a minute did they, — the stranger scowling sarcastically upon his adversary (for such he now was), — gaze upon each other, until Graspum's eyes drooped and his face turned pale. "I have seen you; but at this moment cannot place you," he replied, drawing back his chair a pace. "It were well had you never known me!" was the stranger's rejoinder, spoken in significant accents, as he deliberately drew from beneath his cloak a revolver, which he laid on the table, warning his adversary that it were well he move cautiously. Graspum affects not to comprehend such importune demeanor, or conjecture what has brought him hither. Trembling of fright, and immersed in the sweat of his cowardice, he would proclaim aloud his apprehension; to which medium of salvation he makes an attempt to reach the door. But the stranger is too quick for him: "Calm your fears, Graspum," he says; "act not the child, but meet the consequences like a hero: strange is it, that you, who have sold twenty thousand souls, should shrink at the yielding up of one life!" concludes he, placing his back firmly against the door, and commanding Graspum to resume his seat. Having locked the door and placed the key in his pocket, he paced twice or thrice up and down the floor, seemingly in deep contemplation, and heaved a sigh. "Graspum!" he ejaculated, suddenly turning towards that terrified gentleman; "in that same iron chest have you another box, the same containing papers which are to me of more value than all your invoices of souls. Go! bring it hither!" Tremblingly

did the man-seller obey the command, drew from the chest an antiquated box, and placed it hesitatingly upon the table. "I will get the key, if you will kindly permit me," he said, bowing, as the sweat fell from his chin upon the carpet. The stranger says it wants no key: he breaks it open with his hands. "You have long stored it with goodly papers; let us see of what they are made," said he. Her Graspum commenced drawing forth package after package of papers, the inscriptions on which were eagerly observed by the stranger's keen eye. At length there came out a package of letters, superscribed in the stranger's own hand, and directed to Hugh Marston. "How came you by these?" enquired the stranger, grasping them quickly: "Ah, Graspum, I have heard all! Never mind,—continue!" he resumed. Presently there came forth a package addressed to "Franconia, M'Carstrow," some of which the stranger recognised as superscribed by his mother, others by Clotilda, for she could write when a slave. Graspum would put this last aside; but in an angry tone did the stranger demand it, as his passion had well nigh got the better of his resolution. "How the deep and damning infamy discovers itself! Ah, Graspum, for the dross of this world hast thou betrayed the innocent. Through thine emissaries has thus intercepted these letters, and felt safe in thy guilt. And still you know not who I am?" Indeed, the man-seller was too much beside himself with terror to have recognised even a near friend. "My name is Lorenzo,—he who more than twenty years ago you beguiled into crime. There is concealed beneath those papers a bond that bears on its face the secret of the many sorrows brought upon my family." Lorenzo!" interrupted Graspum, as he let fall

a package of papers, and sat aghast and trembling. "Yes," replied the other, "you cannot mistake me, though time hath laid a heavy hand upon my brow. Now is your infamy complete!" Here the stranger drew forth the identical bond we have described in the early part of our history, as being signed by Marston, at his mansion, on the night previous to Lorenzo's departure. Bidding the man-seller move not an inch, he spread the document before him, and commanded him to read the contents. This he had not resolution to do. "Graspum!" spoke Lorenzo, his countenance flushed of passion; "you can see, if you cannot read; look ye upon the words of that paper (here he traced the lines with the forefinger of his right hand as he stood over the wretched miscreant) and tell me if it be honourable to spare the life of one who would commit so foul a deed. On the night you consummated my shame, forced me to relieve you by procuring my uncle's signature to a document not then filled up, or made complete, how little did I conjecture the germs of villainy so deep in your heart as to betray the confidence I reposed in you. You, in your avarice, changed the tenor of that instrument, made the amount more than double that which I had injudiciously become indebted to you, and transcribed it in the instrument, in legal phraseology, which you made a death-warrant to my nearest and dearest relatives. Read it, miscreant! read it! Read on its sixty-two thousand dollars, the cause of your anxiety to hurry me out of the city into a foreign land. I returned to seek a sister, to relieve my uncle, to live an honourable man on that home so dear in my boyhood, so bright of that which was pleasant in the past, to make glad the hearts of my aged parents, and to receive the sweet forgiveness of

those who honoured me when fortune smiled ; but you have left me none of these boons—nay, you would have me again wander an outcast upon the world !” And now, as the miscreant fell tremblingly on his knees, and beseeching that mercy which he had denied so many, Lorenzo’s frenzy surmounted all his resolution. With agitated hand he seized his revolver, saying, “ I will go hence stained with a miscreant’s blood.” Another moment, and the loud shriek of the man-seller echoed forth, the sharp report of a pistol rung ominously through the mansion ; and quivering to the ground fell dead a wretch who had tortured ten thousand souls, as Lorenzo disappeared and was seen no more.

THE END.

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